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The Week

WHEN the first Labor government took office in Great Britain, in January, 1924, it faced four chief difficulties. The Labor party did not have a sufficient number of men of cabinet quality; those who had the ability were lacking in experience; Mr. MacDonald tried to do too much himself, by acting both as Prime Minister and as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and the expectations of the party and of many of its sympathizers, both in England and elsewhere, were so high that they could not be fulfilled. All these difficulties are diminished with the second Labor government, which was formed last week. The new Cabinet retains most of the able men from 1924, and has some notable accessions. The experience five years ago is certain to prove an asset of the greatest value. Mr. MacDonald, while he is sure to take the greatest interest in foreign affairs, has avoided carrying a double burden by making Arthur Henderson head of that department. The feverish enthusiasm which existed in 1924, and made a reaction inevitable, is greatly moderated. It is a piece of the greatest good fortune for the MacDonald government that the same week which saw it come into power witnessed the settlement of the troublesome question of reparations. While that settlement will not be permanent, there is every reason to believe that it will outlast the Labor ministry. No government in recent British history has taken office with a better hope of accomplishment.

THE personnel of the Cabinet gives a clue to the MacDonald policies, and verifies the conjecture made by Mr. Brailsford in The New Republic of June 12. No concessions are made to the left wing; the government is evidently prepared to lose the ultra-radicals, if necessary, in order to prevent alienating public opinion in general. At this time, there is to be no definite alliance with the Liberals, despite the fact that these hold the balance of power. The letter with which Mr. MacDonald welcomed Mr. W. A. Jowitt, who was elected as a Liberal, joined Labor, and is to be Attorney-General, ruthlessly wiped the Liberal party off the map in a fashion which would have been highly undiplomatic if any specific arrangement were in prospect. Mr. MacDonald evidently proposes to be so moderate in his program that the Liberals in the House will have no excuse to combine with the Tories and turn him out of office, at least for a long time.

THE most difficult immediate problem is, of course, the 1,130,000 persons who are out of work. J. H. Thomas will have this as his chief task, aided by the special group called together to work out the details of a program of public work and other devices for amelioration. Philip Snowden returns to his post as Chancellor of the Exchequer for which his special abilities so well fit him. Sidney Webb's service to the Labor party is recognized by moving him from the presidency of the Board of Trade to be Secretary of State for Colonies and Dominions. Sir John Sankey, who will be Lord Chancellor, is one of the new recruits, and an able

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jurist. The first woman ever to hold a place in a British cabinet is Miss Margaret Bondfield, Minister of Labor, who was the parliamentary secretary for that ministry in 1924. There are others whom space does not permit us to catalogue, whose experience and abilities justify high hopes. If the MacDonald government fails, it will not be for the lack of an able general staff, nor because of a moderate and cautious policy.

CONGRESS has lately undertaken one badly needed reform. Both Houses have passed the reapportionment bill, and there is no doubt that the conferees will agree upon an acceptable compromise. The Constitution provides that the representation of the various states in the House, and in the Electoral College, shall be modified every ten years in accordance with the results of the census; but ever since 1920, the members of the National Legislature have persistently refused to take this action, because shifts in population during the decade 1910-1920 would have increased the delegations of some of the states at the expense of others. Those responsible for this violation of the Constitution fought to the end; they even sought to sabotage the bill by excluding from the count of the population for these purposes aliens and the disfranchised Negroes in the South, but the scandal had become too notorious and they were defeated. While we are glad that Congress has at last obeyed the law, the chief comment must still be that the action should have been taken nine years ago, and that those guilty of the delay have shown an outrageous indifference to a plain duty.

ONCE more there is at least a faint hope that "lame duck" Congresses may be abolished. The Senate has again, for the fifth time, adopted the Norris amendment to the Constitution, providing that after a national election the President and the new Congress shall take office within two months. As matters now stand, the President is not inaugurated until March, and the Senators and Representatives do not take their seats until more than a year after the election, except in case of a special session. The advantages of the Norris plan are obvious, they have been recited in our pages before, and we shall not here repeat them. The question is whether the House will act as it has on the four other occasions and defeat the proposal, and there is unfortunately every reason to believe that it will.

THE annual meeting of the National Electric Light Association—the organization of the electric power industry—gave evidence that the criticism to which that industry has been subjected has made a dent in its tough hide. Intimations were given that reforms would be made in its propaganda procedure, though there is not the slightest chance, of course, that it will cease attempts to influence opinion in the schools and elsewhere on questions so vitally affecting it as public ownership and methods of regulation. In this sense it is committed to propaganda far more than such an industry, say, as automobiles. More significant were the addresses by Mr. Ransome and by the new President, Mr. Matthew Sloan, of the New York Edison Company. They indicate that the leading spirits of the industry are waking up to the fact, long pointed out by such experts as Mr. Morris L. Cooke, that there is more to be made by selling a large amount of current for domestic use at a reasonable price than by selling a smaller amount at a high price. We shall wait anxiously to see whether the private industry in the United States follows the example of the publicly owned industry in Ontario and elsewhere by rate reduction which will promote widespread utilization of home and farm appliances.

H. EDMUND MACHOLD has resigned as Republican chairman for the state of New York. This is good news, and we hope it will not be followed by the calamitous announcement, of which there is a hint from Washington, that he is to succeed D. Work as chairman of the Republican National Committee. Mr. Machold is, so far as we are aware, a man of intelligence and force; but he is also one of the leading figures in the power industry. That industry is today under grave suspicion, so much so that no one closely affiliated with it can hold any important political post without having his motives questioned. Mr. Machold should never have been made head of his party in New York State, and there is ten times more reason why he should not be national chairman.

THOSE who did not read the speech of Secretary of War James W. Good at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Republican party at Ripon, Wisconsin, can best get the gist of it by recalling Herbert Hoover's address at Palo Alto last year. But whereas the Republican nominee at that time confined himself to crediting Republicanism with everything propitious that had happened during the previous eight years, Secretary Good was able to claim everything since 1854, including the increase of 92,000,000 in population and the blessings of the first three months of Mr. Hoover's administration. We wonder if Mr. Good ever heard of the captain of the quartermaster's corps of the regular army before the War, who was under the necessity of accounting for the supplies and equipment which had been lost at his post during the year. He was having a bad time of it, until he was providentially informed that a buck private had just deserted from the ranks. Then he wrote his report; it went something like this: On such-and-such a date, Private Blank deserted from the United States Army, taking with him the following government property: eight bales of hay; 250 feet of two-inch rope; six dozen collar ornaments; three typewriter ribbons; seventy O. D. blankets; six

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pairs of sergeant's chevrons; one forty-five-foot flagpole. The report was duly and solemnly accepted and filed, and everybody was happy. We offer the anecdote, without royalties, to the speaker at the seventy-sixth annual celebration of the founding of the Republican party.

THAT Governor Roosevelt of New York was in earnest in his advocacy of old-age pensions is shown by his appointments to a commission to investigate the subject which was created by the last session of the legislature. Mrs. Sidney Borg of New York has long been interested in progressive legislation, Bishop Francis J. McConnell is an outstanding liberal on social and labor matters and has been associated with one of the chief organizations agitating for old-age pensions, while James M. Lynch, who has held important state offices in labor administrations, is himself an intelligent labor leader. We hope that the other six members of the commission, three of whom were appointed by the president of the Senate and three by the speaker of the Assembly, will contribute as much as the Governor's appointees are likely to do. We may expect the Republican legislature to move slowly in this matter, but we may count on the Governor to do his best to accelerate the movement.

THE Actors' Equity Association, which holds a 100-percent organization of the performers on the "legitimate" stage, has for some time been regarding the un-unionized state of the movie actors as both a menace and an opportunity. With the coming of the talkies, and the migration of many speaking actors into the films, combined with the competition which the new medium offers to the legitimate stage, the need for action became urgent. In spite of the large salaries earned on occasion by some of the stars, the moving-picture employees are in real need of organized protection as to hours and conditions of work, the drafting of contracts and other matters. Equity's announcement that it will attempt now to organize the movies deserves a successful outcome, though it may have a stiff battle ahead of it. Its strength consists in its extremely able leadership, the loyalty of its members, and the control which it exercises over the speaking stage. Its weakness in this new struggle consists in the enormous resources of the employers and their disinclination to modernize their employment policies. In the end, however, a success by Equity could not fail to benefit the motion-picture industry by injecting into it a new element of order and resourceful leadership.

AMERICAN educators come off very sadly in the inquiry conducted by Dr. Manly H. Harper in cooperation with the Teachers' College of Columbia, the results of which have just been announced. Some 3,000 teachers, of all types and from all sections of the country, were queried on a long list of social and political topics, and the summarized answers called forth from Dr. Harper a gloomy verdict: "super-conservative and reactionary." How, in the circumstances, could they be anything else? Schools controlled by the state will reflect the opinions of the state. And teachers, in the primary and secondary schools particularly, who are under steady pressure by the community, will, humanly enough, hold the opinions most calculated to ease off that pressure. Nor is the college professor's unhappy position as the trustees' hired man conducive to assembling liberal faculties. But beyond all these things is the fundamental fact that by its very nature the teaching profession attracts those men to whom, in greater or less degree, seclusion, security, and the traditional, are especially agreeable.

The Reparations Settlement

THE YOUNG plan for reparations settlement furnishes a magnificent example of economic invention. The International Bank is a complicated device fully rivaling in its power and intricacy the most marvelous automatic machine of this machine age. It is a demonstration of the fact that, when confronted by a problem of awe-inspiring difficulty involving economic factors, man does not have to depend on the unguided operation of unchangeable "human nature," proceeding according to unalterable "economic laws." He can devise mechanisms and institutions—not disregarding folkways and economic principles, to be sure—calculated to produce the results he wants.

In order to understand the function of this machine, the world bank which is the heart of the plan, it is necessary to go back once more to the difficulties which the experts faced. There was, of course, the fundamental difficulty that both the German reparations debt and the Allied debts to each other and the United States were enormous obligations arising, not out of productive investments which might create the wealth necessary for payment, but out of devastation, which had reduced productive capacities. Could enough wealth be created to pay them? Or could enough be paid without impoverishing the debtors? Composing the quarrel between the ultimate debtor and her creditors over the amounts and means of payment was subsidiary to this basic difficulty. There was also the related complication caused by the fact that the several nations concerned have different currencies, and that the process of changing one currency into another which is incident to payment may involve upsetting their exchange values, and so damaging the whole international economic structure. This would happen, for instance, if Germany, in order to pay France, had to sell many more marks in exchange for francs than were being bought for other purposes. And that result would arise if Germany were not being paid for an export surplus corresponding to her transfers of reparations, or were

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not receiving equivalent revenue from her foreign investments, or from the proceeds of foreign loans to her.

The Dawes Plan, after five years of "successful" operation, had not succeeded in transferring one cent of net reparation payments, outside of payments in kind—actual goods shipped across the border on government account. German industries, utilities and local governments had been borrowing in other countries far more than Germany had been paying out in cash; this made possible a formal transfer of the cash reparation payments without disturbing the exchange value of the mark, but it meant merely that what she paid with one hand she borrowed with the other. This process could not continue much longer. It was uncertain how much more could safely be lent within Germany by foreigners. What had been lent was devoted very largely to restoring the working capital lost during the War, not to enlarging ultimate productive capacity. It had not yet led to any stable export surplus from Germany—and only by this means could Germany in the long run repay these borrowings, to say nothing of her reparation obligations. Furthermore, Germany's foreign credit was endangered by the fact that the Dawes Plan had fixed no ultimate total of reparations and no term of years for the annuities, which, indeed, were supposed to increase steadily if her prosperity should grow. Valuable as had been the Dawes Plan in bringing about temporary political appeasement, it was only an interim device, useful until some better settlement could be made.

It was necessary, then, substantially to reduce German reparation obligations, and to fix a total and a definite term of years to the annuities. The easiest means by which Germany could induce the Allies to reduce their claim would be by offering a lump-sum payment constituting a large discount for cash. It had been suggested that such a sum might be raised by an international loan to Germany. But since Germany had not developed an export surplus, it was still uncertain how much she could count on paying in interest and amortization on such a loan, and hence how large it might be. A satisfactory bargain on this basis therefore looked impracticable. Another means of reduction would exist if the United States would consent to relinquish a large part of her claims for payment from the Allies, since the Allies were resolved to collect from Germany at least enough to meet their out-payments. But the United States has steadfastly refused to admit such a possibility, and the American experts could not even talk as if the reparations debt and the Allied war debts had any connection with each other. Another clear necessity, if the whole controversy was to be removed from the realm where it could continue to disturb international relations, was to abolish all political connections with it, and all controls within Germany. The machinery governing it had to be made to look as nearly as possible like an ordinary business institution.

In the face of these difficulties, a final solution of the economic problem at this time was clearly impossible. The Young plan does not settle how much reparations are to be paid, when, and by what means. Far from it. You can say, if you like, that it provides that Germany shall pay sums between now and 1988 having a "present value" of 36,996,000,000 marks, or about $8,879,040,000. You can make fanciful comparisons between this sum and the "total" amount of the German debt officially fixed in 1921 at 132,000,000,000 marks, and later understood to be about 50,000,000,000—omitting the mythical "C" bonds. But these are mere words and numerals. The Young plan does something much better than to attach any reality to such symbols. It establishes an economic machine which can remove them from the area of political discussion and enable their settlement at proper occasions in view of the existing economic conditions. It sets up an agency which can discount the debt by one or more bond issues when, as and if it becomes possible to do so. And in the meantime this agency can arrange the receipt of reparation payments in such a way that they can assume as much or as little reality as the economic order of the world requires.

The only amount which, under this new plan, Germany unconditionally promises to transfer across her borders into foreign currencies is the relatively small one of 660,000,000 marks a year—about $158,400,000. The collection of enough revenue to meet this obligation without much hardship is guaranteed by deriving it from a direct tax upon the German railways. Germany will pay it into the International Bank, where it will be either credited to the accounts of the respective Allied governments, or used for the service of any bond issues which may be sold for lump-sum payments. Suppose even this transfer endangers the exchange value of the mark, due to the failure of Germany to develop an export surplus. The International Bank may buy an equivalent amount of mark exchange by lending the money to German industry, or by depositing in the Reichsbank. The Allied governments may leave their money on deposit in the International Bank, thus facilitating such loans or deposits within Germany. Or the several central banks may deposit in the International Bank, or may borrow from it in order to lend to Germany. Or German interests may borrow on the basis of International Bank instruments in order to invest abroad and thus to build up both an export surplus and a stream of incoming revenue. The new bank does not change the underlying economic difficulty, but it makes possible the submergence of German transfer in the tangled skein of international credits and investments.

The remainder of the promised German annuities, which are derived from the general budget,

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are subject to an actual postponement of transfer, and even of collection within Germany, in case of economic crisis. In such a case, whatever is collected on this part of the annuity may remain on deposit in the Reichsbank, without transfer into foreign currencies. The formal limit of postponement is two years—the same period for which, in case of difficulty, Allied payments to the United States may be postponed. But if, at the expiration of this period, Germany still could not pay, and hence the Allies had trouble in paying the United States, an all-round revision of Allied debts and the conditional part of the annuities would be so clearly called for that a refusal to make it is well-nigh inconceivable.

By 1966, the total German annuities are to be so reduced that they will about equal what the Allies owe the United States. From then on, they will run, according to the plan, until 1988—the end of the period for which payments on account of the Allied debts are due to us. The hope of the Allies that the United States will before then recognize the absurdity of payments extending for more than sixty years, and will consent to a revision of the Allied obligations, is clearly expressed in the subsidiary agreement with Germany providing for a reduction of the German annuities proportional to any reduction of the Allied "out-payments." By this means the experts got around the present American unwillingness to discuss further debt revision.

Mr. Young is undoubtedly correct in declaring that the ultimate importance of such an International Bank in other than reparation problems is likely to be even greater than its present importance as a means of solving the problems left by the War. It will be to the banking systems of the world what the Federal Reserve Banks are to the banking system of the United States, or the Banks of England or France are to their banking structures. Indeed, it may easily be more than this. It can mobilize reserves, provide an elasticity to international credit, act as a clearing house for international payments and thus obviate costly shipments of gold, help to stabilize the exchange value of currencies, and indeed, support their internal values. It can aid in stabilizing world price levels and thus in flattening out the business cycle. It can exercise guidance over international investments. Nationalistic conceptions of finance, industry and trade are already out of date, but the world lacked an adequate means of conducting smoothly the international banking functions which are now required and will be increasingly necessary. The power of such a bank will be great, and the nature of its policies correspondingly important. So tremendous, indeed, are the issues here at stake that any discussion of them must be postponed for future occasions. Suffice it to say now that this is an outstanding example of the tendency toward social control of economic processes; whether that control is to be well or badly used, it is an inevitable characteristic of the new economy.

MacDonald and Hoover

TWO events have combined to bring about the most sudden and startling change in the international atmosphere witnessed in many years. The reparations settlement and the victory of the Labor party in Great Britain have cleared the European skies in a way which is likely to have the most profound consequences for the United States. How significant these may be is shown by the suggestion that Ramsay MacDonald may come to Washington to discuss with Mr. Hoover and with Mackenzie King, the Canadian Prime Minister, the vexed problems of Anglo-American and American-Canadian relations.

Whether the heads of the British and American governments meet face to face is, after all, a matter of comparatively little importance. They can negotiate in other ways almost or quite as well, and it is certain that they will. The most important issue with which they must concern themselves is the race in naval armaments, as to which both men have clearly indicated a desire, not merely for limitation but for reduction. Mr. Hoover said as much, using Mr. Gibson as his mouthpiece, at the recent Geneva meeting of the League's Preparatory Commission. He demanded that navies be cut, not only for the sake of the monetary savings in the costs of building and maintaining battleships, but in order that their crews might be returned to the ranks of productive industry—a characteristic bit of Hoover thinking. It is an open secret that he was bitterly disappointed when the Preparatory Commission adjourned without taking any definite action on the American proposal. Construction must soon begin on the American government's $274,000,000 program of cruiser building, and the President is most reluctant to see this happen. He can postpone it if another conference is scheduled.

Mr. MacDonald is, of course, committed with equal definiteness to the policy of naval limitation. Great Britain is a member of the League, and the new head of the government thinks in terms of that body and its obligations. He would personally welcome the arrangement, which has been several times proposed, whereby Great Britain would surrender control of the seas in the case of a "private war," if the United States in turn would surrender its right to carry on commerce with a power which was under the ban of the League of Nations, or was deemed an aggressor under the Kellogg Pact. Mr. MacDonald has not a clear majority in the House; his government will continue to rule by the sufferance of the Liberals, and it is not certain how much support he could get for such a drastic alteration of the *status quo*. At the same time, the formula which he would pursue has lately received the endorsement of many important people in Great Britain and it is by no means certain that his government would fall if he tried to adopt it.

Whether the recodification of sea law must pre-

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cede an agreement for reduction of naval armament is a question which is not yet decided. The New Republic has urged such a recodification in the belief that the naval problem would be greatly simplified and altered by it, and that many of the arguments now used by big-navy advocates would then disappear. This is a view which Mr. MacDonald apparently shares. Mr. Hoover's attitude in regard to it is uncertain; his public discussion of the question of armament has been confined to the aspects mentioned above. If the heads of the two governments can agree upon a formula for reduction under the *status quo*, that is certainly a great gain. If the agreement is preceded by a new arrangement in regard to the rights of neutrals in war-time, that is an even greater gain. The important thing is that the naval race in which the two powers are now engaged shall come to an end.

Whatever the formulas they may use, Messrs. MacDonald and Hoover face a task of the greatest difficulty. The experience of the last few years proves that they will meet the practically unanimous opposition of their own navy departments. They will also be opposed by an important and extremely vocal section of public opinion which is dominated by the idea that security, for each country, can only be preserved by an enormous and constantly growing naval equipment. Opposed to them, also, will be the inertia and indifference which are always a powerful deterrent to any change in the scheme of things. They will need all their intellectual and moral resources if they are to break through this steel ring to any positive accomplishment. They will also need the unanimous and strongly uttered support of all those, in both countries, who feel that a continuance of competitive building between the two great Anglo-Saxon powers is an act of senseless folly.

The National-Origins Dilemma

ONE of the interesting issues at Washington today has to do with fixing immigration quotas on the new basis of "national origins." The 1924 law set up an annual quota limit of 2 percent of any given group of foreign-born living here in 1890. The census of 1890 rather than that of 1920 was chosen, because it was supposed to represent a more typical year of immigration. On this basis, 164,667 immigrants are now admissable each year. The law of 1924 also provided for a revision of the quotas in 1927, on a "national origins" basis. This has been twice postponed by Congress, but is now scheduled to go into effect on July 1.

The national-origins plan will limit immigration to 153,714 a year. Each nationality will receive an annual quota bearing the same ratio to 150,000 that the number of people of that stock living here in 1920 bore to our total white population. Senator Reed, of Pennsylvania, who is the chief advocate of national origins, points out that, after a long debate, in 1924, the Senate approved the principle involved by a vote of 68 to 5. And during the present session the Senate Immigration Committee voted 4 to 2 to ignore the effort for repeal. Senator Nye, of North Dakota, however, has introduced a resolution to discharge the committee from consideration of the matter, in order to open the way to a vote.

At the committee hearings in February, the American Legion and numerous patriotic societies maintained that the quotas have been unfairly allotted. In a nation-wide broadcast, on May 10, Senator Reed defended the national-origins plan as giving a fair limitation "in strict accordance with our racial make-up," claiming that "each year's immigration will be in miniature a counterpart of the whole population of our country. We will not permit our racial composition," he said, "to be changed by immigration." The supporters of the plan have also claimed that opposition to it comes exclusively from alien groups, whose quotas are to be reduced. As a matter of fact, much of the criticism has come from disinterested American citizens.

In the first place, the methods of determining national origins, and fixing the quotas accordingly, are far from accurate. Under the act, the Secretaries of State, Commerce, and Labor set up a committee of governmental experts to ascertain national origins. Their final report was submitted in February, but the uncertainty of their findings led the Secretaries to conclude their letter transmitting the report to the President with this sentence: "We wish it understood that we neither individually nor collectively are expressing any opinion on the merits or demerits of this system of arriving at the quotas." Their letter of 1927, signed by Mr. Hoover as Secretary of Commerce, was more specific:

> We wish to state that in our opinion the statistical and historical information available raises grave doubts as to the whole value of these computations as a basis for the purpose intended. We, therefore, cannot assume responsibility for such conclusions under these circumstances.

Both presidential candidates repudiated the national-origins plan, and the President, in his Special Session message, called for suspension of the clause.

Let us look at the problem the committee faced. Briefly, the figures for our white population in 1920 were obtained by adding together two groups: (1) The foreign-born white, and native-born of foreign parents. In these cases, the country of origin is shown by the census, and estimates are needed only for changes in European boundaries. These classes constitute 35 percent of the total. (2) The natives: for this 65 percent of the population, the country of origin is not shown by the census. The estimate here was obtained by involved calculations as to what proportion was descended from colonial

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stock, and what from immigrants coming since 1790, the date of the first census.

The latest estimate of colonial stock is forty-one million, or 43½ percent of the nearly ninety million total white population of 1920. The countries of origin for this group had to be determined from the 1790 census, the researches of an historical student, and the guesses of a young expert on family names! Here we are certainly on disputed ground. Many early colonists of various nationalities intermarried, and many foreign names were anglicized. Obviously, if all of the Johnsons, Smiths, Millers, and Macks are considered English, the estimate does not give a true representation of the German, Irish, or Swedish contribution.

The figures for natives descended from immigrants since 1790—estimated at twenty and two-thirds millions—were almost equally hard to arrive at, since our immigration records are incomplete, and our census did not classify immigrants by country of origin until 1820, nor by country of birth until 1850. Hence the committee had to guess at the number of immigrants between 1790 and 1820, and then distribute them according to the distribution of similar groups from 1820 to 1830.

Technical criticisms such as these might be unimportant, if it were not for the dogmatic way in which these findings are being used. The 1890 quota method led no one astray; it was frankly a practical expedient. But the advocates of the national-origins plan claim a scientific validity for their figures which is unjustified by the facts.

The assumption, for instance, that a "racial balance" can be established has little to rest on. All peoples have mixed; popular opinion confuses blood with language and customs. The oldest English among us has intermingled with German, Dutch, French, or Irish during the 250 years of our American life, and all have produced good Americans. The national-origins plan is based on a discredited social theory.

There is also the question of practical expediency. If the present system has been working well, practical people ask, why change it for a highly theoretical advantage? Mr. Hull, the Commissioner-General of Immigration, is opposed to the change. The United States Chamber of Commerce points out that "the national-origins plan would revivify antagonisms without any large commensurate gain to our final purpose, which is the building of a homogeneous and united nation."

The new system is likely to go into effect, however, and so the main facts of the changes are of interest. The difference in the total immigration, which is only about 11,000, is unimportant; the question of restriction is therefore not at issue. The chief difference is in the allotment among northwest European countries. The quota for Great Britain and northern Ireland is increased from 34,000 to 66,000, or 93 percent. The German quota is reduced from 51,000 to 26,000, or nearly 50 percent. That of the Scandinavian countries is cut from 19,000 to 7,000, or 66 percent; of the Irish Free State from 28,500 to 18,000, or 40 percent. France loses 1,000, or 22 percent, and Italy gains 2,000, or 50 percent.

The 1924 decision favored immigration from north European countries; but under the national-origins plan, the quotas from southern and southeastern Europe will be increased by 4,500, or a fifth over the present totals from those countries. Thus, the new plan, which was offered as a means of ending friction between European nationals, has defeated its purpose, and is already an issue of political controversy. It will, in fact, probably provoke a strong movement for repeal at the next Congress.

Out of all this discussion, however, may come a more reasonable policy of restriction. A few students of the subject have long advocated regulation on economic rather than artificial national basis. Mr. W. W. Husband, Assistant Secretary of Labor, who was a member of the experts' committee, recently criticized the national-origins plan, and recommended that admission should depend on qualifications to pursue a vocation for which an economic demand exists in the United States. He cited the need for dairy farmers in Vermont, and the surplus of dairymen in Denmark and Holland. There is also a demand for skilled toolmakers and other machinists in Pittsburgh and other industrial centers. Among groups that Mr. Husband held should not be admitted in large numbers were textile workers, coal miners, shoe workers, and garment workers, of whom there is already a surplus in the United States.

It is true that it would not be a simple matter to work out the details of such a system, but neither would it be impossible; and it would at least have the advantage of being based on the present conditions of life in America, instead of on traditional sentiment, like the national-origins plan, or on arbitrary national limitation, such as the 1890 quotas. In the present dilemma, however, the 1890 quotas are to be preferred, and President Hoover's policy in calling for suspension of the national-origins clause deserves support.

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HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN GEORGE SOULE
EDMUND WILSON STARK YOUNG R. M. LOVETT
T. S. MATTHEWS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK
ALVIN JOHNSON E. C. LINDEMAN ROBERT LITTELL
LEWIS MUMFORD GILBERT SELDES R. G. TUGWELL
LEO WOLMAN

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Russia Unrecognized

THE ten days that shook the world ended November 7, 1917. Since then, four Washington administrations have regarded Russia as a legal vacuum. The Soviets, meanwhile, have received diplomatic recognition from twenty-six autocracies, dictatorships, constitutional monarchies and republics. This includes practically all of Europe and Asia except Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia, but none of North or South America except Mexico, Canada, and Uruguay. The Czechs have a trade agreement with Russia. Great Britain opened relations with a trade agreement in 1921, followed it by full diplomatic recognition in 1923, and broke off relations in 1927. The London police raided the office of Arcos, Russian commercial headquarters, and Sir Austen Chamberlain asserted that the discoveries of the police proved that the Soviets were conducting subversive propaganda in Great Britain, in violation of good manners and the trade agreement. The Russian representatives denied the charges. Statements on both sides lacked nothing but candor. Behind it all was rivalry in China. The same year France expelled M. Rakovsky, the Russian ambassador. These episodes in England and France, during 1927, made no change in the legal fact of recognition by the two countries.

Senator Lodge and Senator Borah, in the Senate in 1923, took opposite sides in a debate on Russian recognition. When they sat down, public discussion of the subject almost ceased. The average American, if compelled to express an opinion, would say that recognition does not matter much either way. Since he has come to associate recognition with the support of radical policies, he is inclined to oppose it. Superficially, there is something to be said for this attitude. Americans can travel to Russia, and in Russia, as freely as before the War. Russian visitors to the United States are as common, or at least no more uncommon, than when the Tsar was on the throne. Russian immigrants are arriving, in about the quota numbers. Since quota restrictions have reduced Russian immigration from a pre-war record of over a quarter of a million a year to 2,248, recognition cannot materially affect immigration. American trade with Russia has never been a major factor in the commercial statistics of the United States, but our present exports to Russia have about three times the money value of pre-war exports. Imports are nearly as large as before the War. It may be urged that trade would increase with recognition, but on this point there is no unanimity of opinion. Increased trade would doubtless be preceded by a great expansion of the activity of our international bankers in Russia. Whatever may be true in this respect, however, the relations of the United States and Russia do have an actual and potential significance altogether out of proportion to the meager public attention paid to them. This fact is clearly appreciated by international lawyers and publicists. In spite of the comparatively small intercourse between the United States and Russia, law reports and legal periodicals are already giving much concerned attention to the problems of non-recognition. The nature of a few of these problems may be suggested by the following illustrations:

Suppose that Alexander Karamzov, a resident of Moscow, dies in Russia, leaving securities and jewels in New York. It is the general rule that the distribution of personal property is governed by the law of the domicile of the deceased. It is also the usual rule that a foreign administrator will be appointed ancillary administrator in New York and allowed to take the property, after local taxes and other debts are settled. Private rights of inheritance were abolished in Russia in 1918, but they have been gradually restored so that today there is merely a high inheritance tax and a severe restriction on the persons who may inherit. An administrator is appointed in Russia for Mr. Karamzov's estate. All American obligations are settled, and the Russian administrator claims Karamzov's property. This is opposed by a distant relative, who has no right of inheritance by Russian law but can inherit under New York law. So long as the Russian government remains unrecognized, an administrator appointed by it would apparently have no standing in a New York court.

Or, suppose that the private gallery of Prince Shuken has been nationalized by the Soviets. The government decides, in 1929, that it has a superfluous canvas of Corot and sells a landscape to a Berlin dealer, who ships it to New York. A New York dealer sells it to the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. Can Prince Shuken sue the Corcoran for the return of the picture or for its value? He certainly can if the Russian government cannot give good title. No amount of innocence or good faith will help the purchaser.

Or, suppose that the Russian government directly, or through a newly created state-owned corporation, decides to invest $1,000,000 in motion-picture equipment in the United States. The officers of the corporation bring the money to the United States and spend it on movie stars instead of movie apparatus. The Russian government brings suit in an American court for a receiver and an accounting. In New York, at least, the courts will refuse to compel the embezzler to account.

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Russian business is carried on largely through trusts and joint-stock companies owned either entirely or in part by the government. Some of these corporations are engaging in world trade. Legal disputes may arise between American traders and Russian corporations, over which American courts could advantageously assume jurisdiction. Yet it is hard to see how this can be done effectively so long as the Russian government is regarded as incapable of creating rights our courts must acknowledge. Before the United States came into existence there was no problem of international recognition. The only question was as to the legitimacy of the sovereign. The United States early took the position that it was not its business how a government obtained power; it would recognize any government formed by the will of the nation substantially declared. American recognition was often a frank attempt to assist struggling new republics. Non-recognition implied that there was no legal authority competent to act in international affairs. On this point the courts naturally followed the Executive Department. It was for the President to decide whether or not a new government was to be recognized.

The United States no longer accepts the principle that any stable government will be recognized. Recognition is regarded as an invitation to intercourse. It will be withheld if the means by which the government obtained power, or its practices and policies, impress the Executive as making it an unworthy diplomatic associate for the United States. It should be obvious that legal precedents requiring the courts to follow the lead of the Executive have only a limited application under the present recognition policy. If Russian government property has been destroyed by someone's negligence in the Black Tom explosion, the courts must accept the designation of the Secretary of State as to the representative of Russia who is to conduct the suit and receive the damages, even if the person named was appointed to represent a government that has long since ceased to exist. This is a political question and must be determined by the political departments. Many cases, however, which may come before the courts require no decision as to recognition. They merely require the courts to take judicial notice that a certain government is exercising paramount power in a certain territory. Important private rights should not depend upon executive pleasure. If recognition is to be a weapon in diplomatic contests, the courts should frankly take cognizance of unrecognized governments and of their power to affect private rights in a variety of circumstances. There are indications in recent decisions that some courts are ready to adopt such an attitude. Unless they do so, private international law will be a chaos.

The genius of the common law will doubtless be able in time to deal with the baffling problems arising between American citizens and residents of a country with an unrecognized government. It is nevertheless apparent that the solution of such problems could be hastened by the recognition of Russia. Non-recognition as a permanent policy can only be justified by weighty considerations demonstrably counterbalancing the significant inconveniences of the present situation. After all, nearly every argument that has persuaded the United States to establish diplomatic and consular posts in other parts of the world is equally valid for Russia. One of our characteristic and unfortunate attributes is a tendency to view politics sentimentally instead of realistically. The same tendency is discernible in Russian Communists. This is due, in large part, to a refusal to perceive racial and historical explanations for political happenings. To paraphrase a remark once common about Ireland, "Russia is a country where the inevitable seldom happens and the impossible frequently comes to pass." If one insists upon using an American standard to measure Russian phenomena, one will get curious conclusions. Russia is largely what western Europe would have been if Rome had stopped at the Alps. The political basis of any primitive society is race, and its economic basis communal ownership of land. The Russian *mir* is a community based upon real, or assumed, blood relationship. The *mirs* owned land, alien conquerors made the members of the *mirs* serfs. When the serfs were freed, the land was divided between the lords and *mirs*. In the view of the Russian revolutionists, the confiscation of the land of the nobles, in 1917, was a resumption of ownership. The Russian court, the bureaucracy, and the capitalists, were to a surprising extent alien in origin and thought. They had little popular support. The population were the slaves of the land-owners and capitalists, with no profitable share in their enterprises. In applying the principle of communal ownership, the Russians recognized that land is now only one of the means of production. With that additional principle, the revolution merely reëstablished the system that prevailed throughout Europe before the Romans crushed it. For Americans to become alarmed at such a natural consequence of peculiar Russian conditions is as foolish as the communist dream of a proletarian uprising in a democratic society where poverty has all but been abolished and where skilled workmen, at least, have all the elemental comforts, many luxuries, considerable and increasing leisure, and a personal stake in the corporate enterprises.

The present Soviet regime is an experiment in state socialism rather than communism. In a few years, if the present evolution continues, its economic organization will not differ materially from that of some of the Australian states. The Australians represent a progress from capitalism to socialism. The Russians represent a progress through socialism to capitalism. Russia is socialistic, rather than communistic, even in name. Russia proper, with Siberia and the Far-Eastern Republic, is the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet

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Republic. Since 1923, the official name of the Soviet regime has been the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The U. S. S. R. includes besides the R. S. F. S. R., White Russia, the Ukraine, Turkoman, Uzbek, and the Trans-Caucasian F. S. S. R. The last is made up of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Even before the ratification of the new constitution, January 30, 1924, the New Economic Policy, or Nep, had transformed practices that had prevailed up to 1920, under which private activity and initiative were abolished and distribution was a form of state charity. Soviet law never directly proclaimed the abrogation of private property. There were specific acts of confiscation. Private ownership of land was abolished, many industries were nationalized, and certain legal guarantees of possession were removed. Inflation, as elsewhere, amounted practically to confiscation. The new civil code, adopted January 21, 1923, protected property rights arising since the revolution. The right of inheritance was restored. Domestic trade was permitted to individuals, especially to farmers. The state adopted capitalistic methods for the operation of state industrial enterprises. The government trusts do not differ essentially from the Emergency Fleet Corporation or the United States Grain Corporation, except that the Soviet enterprises, unlike the American, are intended to be permanent. There are many government monopolies, but every year sees an increase in the scope permitted to private enterprise. Licenses have been issued to foreign concessionaries since 1923, and foreign capital in Russia has not been subject, since then, to confiscation or sequestration. Foreign capitalists have had their troubles, but it is everywhere admitted that Soviet pledges to them have been kept. The sum of it all is that the Russia of 1929 is no longer the Russia of 1920, or even of 1923.

The official position of the United States towards Russia was stated by President Coolidge in his message to Congress, December 6, 1923. He said in conclusion:

> Whenever there appears any disposition to compensate our citizens who were despoiled, and to recognize that debt contracted with our government, not by the Tsar, but by the newly formed Republic of Russia; whenever the active spirit of enmity to our institutions is abated; whenever there appear works meet for repentance, our country ought to be the first to go to the economic and moral rescue of Russia. We have every desire to help and no desire to injure. We hope the time is near at hand when we can act.

M. Chicherin, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in a note to the government received December 16, 1923, stated that Russia was ready to discuss all problems mentioned in the President's message, on the basis of the principle of mutual non-intervention. He concluded: "As to the questions of claims mentioned in your message, the Soviet government is fully prepared to do all in its power so far as the dignity and interests of its country permit, to bring about the desired end of renewal of friendship with the United States of America."

Mr. Hughes, then Secretary of State, gave a statement to the press on December 18, 1923, which is the final word of the government on Russian recognition:

> There would seem to be at this time no reason for negotiations. The American government, as the President said in his message to the Congress, is not proposing to barter away its principles. If the Soviet authorities are ready to restore the confiscated property of American citizens or make effective compensation, they can do so. If the Soviet authorities are ready to repeal their decrees repudiating Russia's obligations to this country and appropriately recognize them, they can do so. It requires no conference nor negotiations to accomplish these results, which can and should be achieved in Moscow as evidence of good faith. The American government has not incurred liabilities to Russia, nor repudiated obligations. Most serious is the continued propaganda to overthrow the institutions of this country. The government can enter into no negotiations until these efforts directed from Moscow are abandoned.

Difficulties in the way of recognition of Russia are real but not insuperable. The Russian debt to the United States is the comparatively small sum of $192,000,000, exclusive of interest. Russian external bonds to the amount of about $75,000,000 are owned in the United States. So far as commercial claims are concerned, Mr. Hughes was scarcely accurate in saying that there is nothing to discuss. The Soviets estimate that $58,000,000 worth of American property was confiscated, while Americans have multiplied the figure by seven. The chief obstacle to the payment of American claims is that Russia cannot make a settlement with the United States without taking some action on claims of other countries, especially those of France and England. However, if negotiations for a debt settlement are ever to be effective, it is hard to see any advantage in delaying them. The stronger Russia becomes, and the longer settlement is postponed, the less likely a satisfactory accounting becomes. The Supreme Court recently had before it cases growing out of the French Spoliation Claims of 1795. Let us hope that this precedent has not attracted the favorable attention of the administration.

The question of propaganda is complex and irritating. Moscow is the seat of the government of the Soviet Union, the Communist party, and the Third International. The last is a radical international labor office, established under Lenin's leadership and dominated by the Russian Communist party, which also controls the Soviet government. The Communist party is not recognized in the Russian constitution and not all its leaders are officers of the government. But no one familiar with American politics, especially municipal politics,

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will find it hard to understand how little significance can often be attached to the promises and declarations of the nominal office-holder. Soviet officials may promise to conduct no offensive propaganda and keep their promise, and yet propaganda may continue to flow from the offices of the Third International. It is not likely, however, that propaganda would increase with recognition of the Russian government; and it might decrease. The adolescent nervousness towards communist argument in the United States will eventually be outgrown. No one who knows the facts doubts that the Russians now enjoy and are exploiting the most effective possible means of presenting their cause favorably. Soviet films are being shown in the larger motion picture theaters in the country. Daily papers and magazines of the widest circulation give ample publicity to Russian news. Russian sympathizers could not have greater freedom in advocating their ideas if Russia had been recognized in 1918. Communism, like any other form of truth or error, must rise or decline as a result of free competition in the marketplace of ideas.

The Hoover administration will have the opportunity and responsibility of restating American policy towards Russia. And a modification of this country's attitude might have the same happy effect in world politics that followed the new courtesy to the Republic of Mexico.

JOHN HANNA.

Arbiters of Obscenity

IN A SPACIOUS office, hung with draperies and overlooking the Lincoln Memorial, sits a conscientious man, named Horace J. Donnelly, whose mission in life is to keep the rest of us pure, at least so far as the mails are concerned. Although a lawyer and such a busy one that he has, unfortunately, little time for literature, the scheme of our government designates him, as Solicitor of the Post Office Department, to decide whether any work that passes through the United States mails may justly be considered obscene. It was Solicitor Donnelly who ruled that "Hatrack," "The Well of Loneliness," and Mrs. Dennett's pamphlet, were unfit for Uncle Sam's letter boxes. At other critical moments of his long career as Assistant, Acting, and now actual Solicitor, he has frowned upon Judge, the Harvard Lampoon, and the University of Virginia's Virginia Reel, whereupon postal service was at once denied to these carriers of corruption.

The law that empowers an attorney for the government to determine what knowledge would demoralize its people dates back to 1865. But section 211 of the present criminal code, which authorizes postal ostracisms, was born in 1873, when Anthony Comstock, having arrived in Washington with a suitcase bulging with naughty exhibits, classed information about unwanted babies as obscene literature. On the floor of the House he contented himself with flashing specimens of his wide collection of lascivious pictures and publications; but in the measure he prepared for the shocked members he added the momentous words about the babies, so that now the law on obscenity reads:

> Every obscene, lewd or lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character, and every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use is hereby declared to be non-mailable matter and whoever shall knowingly deposit anything declared by this section to be unmailable shall be fined not more than $5,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

It has been suggested that this birth control inclusion was a trick put over on the unwitting legislators. But even if it were true that these Honorables once passed a law they hadn't read, they have had full opportunity since then to revise their decision. Apparently they are satisfied with their achievement. When the Voluntary Parenthood League, in 1920, sought a sponsor to amend the law, they were met with indifference and reproach. "Even if I had no religion at all," retorted a Catholic member, "I should oppose your outrageous idea."

It would be impossible for overworked Censor Donnelly, in enforcing section 211, to sniff everything that comes off the press. As head of the legal department of the Post Office, he has other duties to perform. Hence the preliminary sniffs are delegated to Post Office inspectors scattered throughout the country and trained to run down unclean matter. The Solicitor is also aided by societies for the protection of our morals, by customs inspectors who can tell a wicked foreign classic on sight, and by women's patriotic organizations that generously devote their time to keeping track of radical magazines. All discoveries are sent to the Solicitor's office in Washington, where his assistant on impurity spends the day marking the choicest passages for his chief. To this office come suggestive-story magazines gobbled up by high school boys and girls, pamphlets in which ladies brazenly offer themselves for marriage, or even personal letters, if a wife, say, has spoken in too intimate terms of her husband, and her correspondent has been moved to report it. For anyone has the privilege of com-

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plaining about anything. The offending words will be read, ruled on by the Solicitor, and if found spicy enough, turned over to the local Post Office inspector and United States District Attorney for prosecution. Last year, 262 arrests were made, and 220 convictions obtained, so you may see that impurity in our country has not yet been abolished.

Censor Donnelly and his staff maintain that one does not need to be a scholar to pass on the obscenity of a piece of writing, for the law states plainly what is obscene. True enough, when the literature concerns the unlucky babies; but what of "Hatrack," "The Well of Loneliness," and the poem in the New Masses, which all fell under the sweeping ban against lascivious literature? In acting on these the Solicitor had no specific guide in the law, and was compelled to use his own judgment about obscenity. This authority makes Mr. Donnelly, otherwise a bureaucrat of lesser distinction, someone of whom we must take notice.

Sitting on the sun porch of his suburban home, studying the pages of the American Mercury, marked "Test," the Solicitor's slight figure hardly suggests the important role he may, at any moment, assume in our lives. Yet he is the only man in the history of the Post Office who, starting at the very bottom, has worked his way up to the office of Solicitor. Born in the District of Columbia, he came to the Post Office, like thousands of other young men, to sort mail. But unlike them, he was a glutton for work and always fastened his eye on the job above him. Before long he was a stenographer in the law department, and an evening student at the Georgetown University law school. In fourteen jumps covering a period of more than twenty-five years he reached the Solicitor's perch. But even now, when he is in his fifties and might well consider himself "arrived," he refuses to rest on the laurels he won as bond examiner during the War and judge in the cases against fraudulent oil-stock promoters. Instead, his briefcase is packed each night with papers to be pored over when dinner and his evening stroll around the block are done. He has little time, alas, to read anything but the Washington newspapers and the unclean literature that is forced upon him.

Besides his industry and conscientiousness, the Solicitor's personal habits seem to fit him admirably for his difficult task as censor. He neither smokes, drinks, swears, nor tells off-color stories. He shuns both poker and politics, although he is accredited with good political backing. His self-restraint is excellent, and only a slight twitching of his mouth warns his subordinates when he is angry.

The chief characteristic of Solicitor Donnelly's personality is his caution. He speaks seldom, and when he does, can talk with skill for half an hour without saying either yes or no. This discipline has saved him from many a blunder. Fastidious about words, since he has passed on so many of them officially, he protests against being called a censor. And when a newspaper man asked him who had handled the Dennett case in 1922, he frowned on the implications of the word "handled."

Modest as when he first came to the Post Office, many years ago, at $900 a year, the Solicitor is genuinely amazed at receiving an inquiry from the press concerning one of his famous bans. No one would guess, from the discretion of his staff, that his office is a public one. A reporter who was once found rashly questioning one of the subordinate officials of the department was properly reprimanded; and when the hearing of the "Hatrack" case was held, the press was admitted only after a hot dispute.

Violators of the obscenity act have the right to demand a hearing, but they are severely discouraged from any such indecorous publicity. The sponsors of "Hatrack," however, insisted on their privilege. On one side of the large table in the Solicitor's office were ranged H. L. Mencken, Arthur Garfield Hays, and Alfred A. Knopf; facing them sat Horace J. Donnelly, his general assistant, Walter E. Kelly, and his specialist on salacity, William C. O'Brien. It was three against three, with the advantage on the side of the government, for its men were all lawyers. Starting with dignity, the discussion soon became a heated debate. The Solicitor was charged with being a cat's-paw of the Boston Watch and Ward Society, which had been offended by the article. "What of Rabelais and the Bible?" asked Mr. Hays. "Suppose I reprint a page from the newspaper accounts of the Rhinelander trial?" challenged Mr. Mencken. Mr. Donnelly did not answer at once; he knows that wise men think twice. But when pressed, he met the situation with an apothegm: "We only cross bridges when we come to them."

Another ruling that fortified the Solicitor's prestige among the dainty was made, a few years ago, against the Harvard Lampoon. Certain righteous citizens had promptly realized that a nude lady between the covers of a college funny paper was an attack on the country's moral foundations; though it may be that a burlesque, on the front page, of Leutze's painting, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," had provoked the patriots to stir up the righteous. The youthful transgressors made amends by bleaching the flag, covering the nude lady, and referring their readers to the original painting of her, by Manet, which was excellently reproduced among the university prints.

The censor's job is, indeed, a thankless one. Publications that have been ruled unfit for the mailbag are scooped up on newsstands, to which they are furtively brought by traveling salesmen. All sorts of difficulties beset an arbiter of obscenity. Books that promise alluring and illegal information in their chapter headings often fail to make good their promise. What is the poor censor to do then? Shall he declare the book unmailable when it is not obscene, shall he turn it loose when it purports to be obscene, or shall he prosecute the author for misleading the public?

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The hardships attached to the censor's office surely entitle Solicitor Donnelly's assistant, William C. O'Brien, to his share of recognition. This gentleman spends all of his working time in reading obscene matter which, alas for censorship, seems merely to have added to the natural jollity of his disposition. No less loyal to the cause than his chief, he carries his responsibility with a smile. For he has learned to ward off the reporters by twisting a query into a joke.

Although underpaid, like most government employees, this expert in obscenity is more versatile than the Solicitor. Two years of veterinary surgery have given him the medical background to distinguish between the work of a quack and a physician; several years of art work have enabled him to behold a picture of the human body with composure; and his literary skill brought him the opportunity of writing several chapters of Frederic Haskin's very respectable book, "The American Government."

Despite these attainments, Mr. O'Brien has been left in obscurity, unjustly handicapped by his name. For the unmistakable stand on obscene literature and birth control taken by Pope Pius XI places any censor in this country, whose name is O'Brien, in an embarrassing position. Like his chief, he takes refuge in discretion. DUFF GILFOND.

Help Wanted: Female

Housekeeper: under 40; some nursing training preferred; intelligently fond of children, to take full charge 5-room apt. for busy woman editor, partial care 2 children, 6 and 8, both in school. Private room. No laundry. $80. Times X 49.

THERE were eighty-six replies to that want ad, thin and thick, clean and messy, pencilled, typed and penned on pink, blue, white, lavender, gray, beige, black-bordered and orchid stationery. From that bundle of letters and more than a dozen interviews that resulted from it, I got a sharp picture of the middle-aged woman who, after years of security and content, finds herself among the desperate semi-skilled that clog the labor market.

Mrs. Jones, for example, was a slim, gray little woman with a drooping mouth, and hands that trembled. According to her brief, well written note, she had "the qualifications specified," but—

"I know I am older than you want," she said, "Perhaps I should have mentioned it, but I was afraid you wouldn't even see me. I've got to find a place soon. My husband died—even the insurance went, getting things straightened out—I have a letter here from our landlord and from my minister. I was always counted a good housekeeper, and it is all I know how to do—"

Mrs. Jones was plainly unequal to such emergencies as croupy children, or a clogged sink, or marketing on a stormy day. She wept when I did not hire her.

Mrs. Loring had come to New York from Montreal to give her fifteen-year-old daughter a chance to study stage dancing. A much-advertised teacher had pronounced the girl talented and taken her as a pupil at twelve dollars a lesson. Mrs. Loring expected to support herself and Madge and pay for these lessons "for a year anyway."

"I can just manage on eighty dollars a month, with our board and room. Madge needs ever so many costumes. Mr. Blank is going to feature her in all his exhibitions. You'd find her a lovely girl, and I'd like to have her in a home like this. She'd be here for breakfast and dinner only—they take lunch at the studio—and of course we'd expect a room with two beds—"

The late Mr. Robinson had been a teachers' college librarian.

"Librarians are dreadfully underpaid," his widow whined. "We couldn't save a cent with the children in school—three lovely girls and a fine man I've raised. Mr. Robinson was only fifty-one when he died of pneumonia last winter. My children are good as gold, but they can't help me just now. I'll keep your house nice and clean, just as I kept my own for twenty-six years. And I love children, though I never expected I'd be selling my mother-heart like this—"

The thin, nervous voice went on. I am afraid Mrs. Robinson was in the middle of a sentence when I managed to close the door behind her.

Of the eighty-six applications, more than fifty were from women who had always had their own homes, and who had neither inclination nor capacity to put aside their own problems and concentrate on a wage-earning job. Most of the other applicants were trained women discarded by their trade or profession because they were "too old."

Miss Hutchins, for example, after ten years of private duty and eight of public health nursing had lost her position on two weeks' notice, "because of her age." For three months she had tried to find "some sort of nursing position." Now she was applying for housework, obviously feeling that what she asked was "beneath" her.

Miss Cramer wrote, "I was secretary to Mr. Brown of the First National Bank for eleven years. A year ago I had a nervous breakdown. Now there seems to be no chance for me to get back into sec-

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retarial work. I am not forty yet, but nobody is taking anyone over twenty-nine. Therefore I am applying for the position you advertise—"

"For nine years before my marriage (1910 to 1919) I was a public school teacher," Mrs. Meyer wrote. "My husband died last fall after a long illness, leaving me with two boys, aged eight and five. I find that even if I go back to training school for a year they will not consider me for a teaching position because of my age—I am forty-one—so I am forced to turn to housework—"

Mrs. Sergen gave no details about herself, but asked "the courtesy of an interview." It was an arresting little note because it was so simple and dignified and yet so full of charm. Mrs. Sergen herself was graceful and charming, with the face and voice and bearing of old-world breeding and background. She was Russian, she explained, in her perfect English. She spoke five other languages. She had had a musical as well as an academic education. She understood housework. But had she ever done housework? No-o-o, not exactly. The last ten years she had done many things. She was very adaptable.

"I keep no help except my housekeeper and a part-time laundress," I pointed out. It seemed like putting a blooded race horse to a plow to think of Mrs. Sergen brushing down walls, mopping kitchen linoleum, washing woodwork, cleaning a gas range.

"But certainly, I understand," she said bravely.

As we talked I got clearly a sense of her aching pride, of her weariness and despair.

"I am afraid this sort of position would be too hard for you," I ventured.

She could not control the quiver in her voice as she burst out with sudden passion,

"I am too old to teach in a school—they say I am too old and nervous to be a music teacher any longer—I cannot do fine embroidery because my eyes have grown old—I am too old to model hats or dresses or shoes—I am too old to pose for the artists—too old to nurse, even. I have done all these things and more in ten years. Now I am fifty—I have nothing and nobody. And you are thinking I am too old even for servants' work. You are polite, Madame, but it is what you are thinking. What can I do? Dear God, what can I do?—"

BEULAH AMIDON.

College as It Might Be: When?[1]

IT IS fortunate that the race between education and catastrophe is being run by tortoises, and not by jack-rabbits; education may still save civilization! But first, it appears, we must save education, or at least the colleges, which are so muddled that they seem unable to save themselves, much less civilization. It may be too late, but assuming that it is not, what is the situation and what the difficulties?

The story of the American college is familiar enough. Its curriculum and methods, we know, are a heritage of the medieval English university. But there have been many modifications. The battle of the sciences and the humanities and the impact of German scholarship left their mark at the end of the last century. More recently the social sciences and the ripened fruits of furibund research—minute specialization and Ph.D.-ism—have come. Departments of knowledge have divided and increased; "subjects" have multiplied after their kind, and there is no end. For a time we had the free-elective system, the academic automat, but that chaos was too much, and a compromise was devised, the "distribution-concentration" curriculum. But the most vital change was something lost. Formerly the college had an ideal of humane culture. Arnold defended it against Huxley, and Huxley, in different language, championed the same ideal against Arnold; it was a battle of words, for they both stood for humane culture. But we don't now; our educational ideal has been lost in the modern scuffle. And we have nothing—or, at least, we have agreed upon nothing—to put in its place.

Meanwhile it became "the thing" to go to college. Colleges and universities had to organize for quantity output and high-speed production. They not only had to modify their curricula, but also their methods, to handle the rush. At the same time, the professional schools raised their standards, adding confusion to the college by asking for two or three years of specialized prerequisites. Despite it all, the college tried to retain some remnant of the liberal tradition, but all conceptions of its purpose were lost in the *mêlée;* the core of the curriculum is now the subject—a "course," no matter what. The result has been atrophy, and the students—bless their perspicacity!—have turned to the only vital elements remaining in our colleges, the occasional great teacher and extra-curricular activities.

The world is never without its prophets, and the educational world can claim its share. Their teachings are with us now. A variety of innovations are being tried; new aims, new curricula, and a myriad of new methods are to be found in colleges through-

[1] This essay is one of those submitted in The New Republic's recent prize contest. Mr. Orr was graduated from Swarthmore College in 1928, and is now an assistant instructor in English at the University of Wisconsin.

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out the country. At Antioch the student combines a grounding in liberal education, including sciences and humanities, with vocational pursuits to develop the chief elements of personality—character, intelligence, and power. At Claremont a federation of small colleges, independently organized, with different aims, seeks to solve the problem of mass education; and Harvard is now considering a similar experiment.

The University of Wisconsin has set up the Experimental College, another attempt to solve democracy's educational difficulties. A frankly humanistic philosophy of education, a selective curriculum, teaching methods adjusted to the individual student, and a maximum of student self-responsibility are being tried on the Guinea Pigs. Swarthmore has taken the lead in "an endeavor to spot and to develop excellence" through honors courses granting freedom from the usual routine of lectures and examinations to students of special interests and abilities. Various modifications of the curriculum, orientation courses, comprehensive examinations, sectioning of classes, junior and senior colleges—all these seek to preserve some of the old liberal tradition and to achieve new values suited to modern conditions. But these efforts, for the most part, do not solve the problem; they are new props and a few new wings to an old structure which really needs rebuilding from the ground.

Now, of course, such sweeping statements will not carry conviction to those who see present conditions as "not so bad." A little tinkering and fixing up here and there, some believe, will suffice; and so it will if a college education consists of taking so many courses and accumulating so many credits. But tinkering will not do; the patient will have to take a general anesthetic and undergo a major operation. If we could only complete our diagnosis!

It is fair to point out that many persons whose business it is to know such things say that the impasse to which the college has come is the inevitable consequence of modern civilization: the scientific and industrial revolutions—materialism!—have finally reached the college; and the college is embarrassed. Others have assigned the cause to the bankruptcy of philosophy: science and technology have given us a new world, and philosophy has failed to interpret it for us; hence the college is a ship without a compass. But whatever the true analysis, it appears that our task is to face the situation as we find it and at the same time to build a compass. May I suggest a way to meet the immediate difficulty and then indicate some of the considerations to take account of in formulating a philosophy of liberal education, which I take to be the new compass required?

To say that we must raze to the ground and build anew is perhaps sheer extravagance. And to suggest that such attempts as Swarthmore honors courses and the Experimental College merely represent a tinkering with a condemned building is to do scant justice to two serious attempts to find a way out of an admittedly bad situation. They do not profess to attack the problem of liberal education entire, but these and others, in combination, may well point the true goal. And yet so long as we are not clear about the fundamentals of our task, we cannot appraise with assurance such innovations and experiments.

Realizing that we are in a critical situation, I suggest a college with a frankly experimental purpose. Its philosophy should be humanistic, affirming frankly that, so far as the college is concerned, man is the center of all things worth knowing and that the proper study of undergraduates is man, and not gods or monkeys. Combining the general ideal and methodology of the Experimental College, leading all students in the first years to face the human problems and meeting the needs of the individual as he grows in understanding, with the Swarthmore attempt, in the last years, to develop excellence through freedom for intensive work in special fields, I should hope for a college which would escape many of the present weaknesses. But even such an ideal college would demand a faith in matters which should be doubted. The Experimental College-Swarthmore combination appeals strongly; I should like to try it myself, and am willing for anyone to endow such a college so that I may matriculate there—or even be dean! But I should want to be sure that the faculty was skeptical about a number of rather important modes of procedure, and these I shall try to suggest.

It is clear, I think, that an important cause of the present confusion was the addition of more and more subjects to the course of study. It is impossible now for the faculty to prescribe a curriculum; the most it can do is to require a major and minor distribution and concentration. But it seems that a philosophy of education cannot consist of the mere statement that the college shall offer courses. Is there some thing or things in the realm of the mind or of knowledge of which it can be said that all students *ought* to have or ought to acquire it? Are some of life's values so important, or, to make it a social matter, are some social values so vital that all of us ought to achieve them? If we can determine what those values are, if we can say, for example, that the understanding and control of human activity by ideas are such values, then we have the basis for a philosophy of liberal education which will lend clarity to our efforts.

But we are told that the natural sciences and behaviorism have destroyed the mind as an instrument of ideas and that anthropological and sociological data prove that our ideals are but products of tradition and custom, so that talk of controlling human life is nonsense. Even those who call them-

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selves educators tell us that we must not direct our efforts to changing a man's ideas, but to changing his behavior patterns. And if their doubts become ours, we find ourselves asking whether, after all, students ever do transform ideas into activity, whether ideals for most of us do guide behavior, or whether we pick up ideas here and there to justify attitudes already more or less habitual.

Now all of this makes a tremendous difference. Even if these scientific and sociological notions are false or pseudo-scientific, they are confusing; if they, or our misunderstanding of them, undermine our beliefs, how can we expect successful teaching? Or if they are right, these doctrines are of greater moment; they will affect fundamentally our methods and our curricula. Will a humanistic philosophy be possible? Can education have a liberal purpose? Can college continue to be a matter of ideas? It seems that we must await answers to some of these questions before we dream of Utopian colleges.

And in the wake of such questions come a myriad of others. Granted that we can organize our liberal college, will its curriculum be suited to the many or to the few? Are all of us capable of education in terms of ideas? And if it should happen that the curriculum is for everyone alike, what of the issue between freedom and compulsion? We have learned the evils of compulsion in education, but can we escape it entirely if we expect to ask students to go through a process which the philosophers think is good for them? If we can answer such questions, we shall be better able to answer questions of entrance requirements, examinations, grades, credits, and the like. The questions may seem fantastic, but their implications are real enough; I doubt if we shall know the meaning of liberal education until we have a new philosophy, and I doubt if we can build a liberal college until we can adjust methods and curriculum to a definite purpose.

Meanwhile let us experiment. Harvard, with its recent gifts, might create a dozen liberal colleges for experimentation. Scripps, as one of the Claremont Colleges, should become a laboratory specimen. The Experimental College at Wisconsin must remain true to its name and purpose. And there are Antioch, Rollins, Whittier, Old Bennington, and twenty others; they are all, in a sense, experimental colleges. If we can experiment in this way with methods and curricula, and if, at the same time, we can try to solve some of the philosophical questions involved, the lot of liberal education will improve. We retain a certain sentimental attachment for the traditions of the liberal college, and some of its values we must retain; but we must also infuse new life and new purposes into these values if we would do so. Our quest is to discover how it may be done.

DOUGLAS ORR.

Washington Notes

SOON or late, I am convinced, the Chief Engineer will have trouble with his secretariat. Probably it will not reach the point of open eruption, but there will be considerable boiling, seething and sputtering underneath. In the circumstances, this seems to me almost inevitable. There are so many secretaries, counting in the unofficial ones, that their lines get crossed occasionally and friction results. This is true despite the reverent awe with which they all look up to "that great figure in the White House," so eloquently referred to by "Deacon" Adams in his somewhat silly speech in Boston a few weeks ago, when he undertook to castigate the Senate progressives for being deficient in party regularity. When you consider the extraordinary political irregularity of the Deacon's famous family, when you examine the Deacon's own record, and when you add to that the fact that "party regularity" and "progressive" are not reconcilable terms, the speech of the Deacon on the subject takes rank as the prize piece of political humor for the current year. The surprising thing is that the Deacon and his Chief did not get more of the unfavorable reaction. The progressives, for some odd reason, left Senate comment exclusively to the "Gulfport Entertainer," as the massive-minded Senator from Mississippi, Mr. Harrison, is occasionally referred to by the ribald and irreverent.

But to return to the White House secretaries. On the chart their duties are divided with mathematical nicety. Their functions and fields are scrupulously marked off and their offices allocated in the most approved, expert and efficient fashion. But the business does not always work out so precisely. There is no place here to go into details—and they are trivial anyway—but the fact is that there is occasionally a knock in the White House machinery, quite audible to some of the careful listeners, one which is prevented from reaching the keen ears of the Chief only by the well timed and not entirely spontaneous laughter of the entire White House circle. Among themselves the secretaries may exchange many a mean look, but facing the Chief they are always merry and bright, a small band of devoted brothers, all for one and one for all. In the evenings, however, away from the overshadowing presence of the "great figure," out of the executive office atmosphere, I grieve to report that there is a certain amount of backbiting among the boys. But what of it? There always is. Now I come to think of it, in the days of the good Calvin there was some pretty ugly under-cover scratching and gouging among that solemn and subservient little White House force of his. It is the way of all flesh; even the great figures cannot eliminate it—by taking thought.

One incident that seems to bear on this situation concerns the obviously inspired "stories" appearing in various selected Republican and pseudo-Republican newspapers, to the general effect that unless the Senate rewrites the tariff bill as it came from the House to make it conform to the Hoover idea and the Hoover promise of "limited revision" it will be vetoed by the President. These stories were deliberately planted by one of the secretaries, and

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not without authority. This fact, however, did not prevent considerable vigorous, though covert, criticism from other members of the secretariat. It was alleged that the stories had been put out in the wrong way. It was alleged that they had been put out at the wrong time. It was alleged that the wrong papers had been chosen. It was alleged that there would be an "unfavorable reaction." It was alleged that the Chief should have inspired the stuff himself at one of the regular press conferences. And there were other allegations, more or less trivial, and interesting only as showing the impossibility of keeping down dissension in a large secretariat, however expertly planned and organized. The real trouble in this case is that the Chief has never definitely designated one secretary as a political spokesman and banned political interest and outgivings for the others. And if he did it wouldn't work, politics being the one thing in which the secretariat, together with everybody else in this vicinity, is unanimously interested.

To those not associated with the executive force and able to consider the matter calmly, this deliberately inspired idea of a White House tariff veto is the most significant White House news of the month. It reveals, for the first time, the Hoover mind toward the tariff monstrosity which was put over in the House by the combined strength of the numerous tariff lobbyists who have been gathered here in Washington for the past four months. The interesting thing is to see how it is followed up. Either it is a bluff or it isn't. In this place last week I think I mentioned that the great undetermined question about Mr. Hoover, the one which in one form or another is asked most frequently in Washington, is whether he has "guts." By the end of this session I believe we shall have the answer to that question and it will be furnished by what happens to the tariff bill.

No informed person believes the bill, as it comes from the Senate, will be bettered. On the contrary, the almost unanimous opinion is that it will be more offensive so far as the manufacturing rates are concerned. If this proves true and the President is unable to have the whole bill rewritten in the conference committee, the test of the Hoover courage will come. There is no question that it will take courage to veto the bill. It means kicking Congress squarely in the face. It means demonstrating that Congress will have completely wasted seven long and mostly hot months. It means a crack over the knuckles for some of the heaviest contributors to Hoover's own campaign and some of the most stalwart props of the Republican party. It means keen disappointment to a considerable number of party Senators with political—and some of them personal—stakes in certain schedules. If there were an aroused public sentiment against the bill it would not require so much nerve to veto it. With such a sentiment as existed in 1910 against the Payne-Aldrich Bill, the political risk of signing a bad bill would be greater than that involved in refusing to sign. But while the general journalistic view is unfavorable, no one contends that there is at this time any real emotional disturbance among the people over the tariff situation. In the light of these facts a tariff veto will be no easy hurdle for Hoover to take. As they say in Minnesota, it will be "some yump." My hope is that he either has to take it or funk it. What I want to know is which he will do. The prevailing opinion, I may state, favors the latter.

T. R. B.

Washington.

Van Dine and His Public

THE contemporary detective story shows, roughly, three periods of development, beginning with the astounding apparition of Sherlock Holmes in the late 1880's, continuing through the doldrums, after the thinning out of Conan Doyle's fancy and the feebleness of his imitators, and arriving at the present, when this type of fiction returns to the native land of Edgar Allan Poe, for singular treatment at the hands of S. S. Van Dine.

Poe used only the short form, and his stories are still models because of concentration on the art of deduction; they are like mathematical formulæ. The first English detective novel was "The Moonstone," and I share the general opinion that it is still the best. Apart from its excellent plot, it is memorable for one thing which helps us measure the progress of the type. "The Moonstone" was not considered by Wilkie Collins to be essentially different from his other novels; like them it was a study in the interaction of character and circumstances. Gaboriau, like every Frenchman writing after Balzac, had to give the appearance of making a social study, but his novels and those of Conan Doyle purify the detective story, by developing the technique of Poe, rather than that of Collins. In his novels, Doyle uses adventure, morbidity, and horror to nourish his tale of deduction; in the stories, in the early groups especially, he is almost as algebraic as Poe. Raffles, Arsène Lupin, and a host of scientific detectives are his descendants.

The doldrums came with the introduction of heavy romancing into the detective story, with elaborate local color, characterization, and realism. The period was not without its notable books; in "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd" we have a perfect "natural" in detective fiction; G. D. H. and Margaret Cole have made some success with Inspector French; Dr. Thorndyke and several other respectable detectives have appeared. Yet the period may be summed up as that in which President Wilson was discovered to be a reader of the works of J. S. Fletcher—that is, a period of hack work more than of imagination.

The amazing success of S. S. Van Dine about four years ago has given new life to detective fiction. Two book clubs are concerned exclusively with distribution of these stories; half a dozen writers in other fields have composed one or more of them; and the impetus of Van Dine's success has brought forth several extremely good mysteries. The first of Van Dine's books appeared serially in Scribner's Magazine, a signal honor, and its success was so great that the second followed; both were bought by the movies, traditionally shy of mysteries. With the fourth, Van Dine removed to the larger circulation of the American Magazine and his pseudonym was no longer a mystery: he is Willard Huntington Wright.

The singular thing about this success is that it was

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achieved in spite of the author, who created a disagreeable pedant for his detective and treated him as if he were the most admirable and amiable of men. Crotchety detectives are no novelty; Cuff, in "The Moonstone," anticipates them as he does nearly everything interesting. Van Dine's Philo Vance, with his implausible English accent, his unparalleled erudition, and his swank, would be enough to turn anyone away from the stories after five pages were it not that the stories, by that time, are more interesting than the detective. The first two novels, "The Benson" and "The 'Canary'" Murder Cases, were based on incidents not yet gone from the public mind, those of Elwell and Dot King; they were the best of the lot. The third, "The Greene Murder Case," was a compilation of nearly all the strange murders noted in criminology, and the solution of the mystery was properly found in two or three dozen German textbooks in the library of the half-dozen victims. The basis of the latest in the series, "The Bishop Murder Case," is a mixture of Mother Goose and higher mathematics, with such an exposition of the theories of Einstein as I have not discovered in the daily press.

Van Dine is in the good tradition of the detective novel because his interest is in deduction. In his early stories his detective insisted that every murder was, in a sense, a work of art, and the murderer, like the artist, left his imprint on his handiwork. In the latest book he returns to more ordinary reasoning, suggesting that the murderer commits his crimes in the way he does because of his character—in this case, because he is an adept of interstellar mathematics and holds finite life in contempt. But what he now omits is the entirely human interest of motive. The first two cases were fairly motivated; but as Van Dine grew more and more anxious to conceal his criminal, he gradually deprived him of any plausible motive, so that in the latest version we have a man putting seven or eight of his nearest friends to death in order to cast suspicion on someone else. It is true that he is professionally jealous of this last person.

What constitutes fair dealing with the reader in this type of story has never been well defined. It is, however, considered desirable that the actual criminal should be more or less in plain sight while the detection is going on —the fact that in actual murders he usually manages not to be, is put aside—and nothing is more irritating, or bad form, than the introduction of an unknown at the end to shoulder the blame. The excellent "Bellamy Trial" gave each character exactly its due because each appeared before the jury, the criminal included, and each received just the importance the trial would give him. It would also be fair dealing to make the motive adequate. To complicate mysteries, authors have assigned adequate motive to three or four characters, and it is almost obligatory that several of them should have opportunity as well. Van Dine has built up motive for each of a series of characters, killing them off just as the motivation becomes convincing, and then has had nothing left for his murderer.

This is, of course, the pedantry of murder, and it leads to an interesting speculation. People generally assume that bad work in literature comes from being too conscious of one's public; here is a case where bad work is due to contempt of the public. Van Dine knows perfectly that if twelve human beings are capable of understanding the Einstein theory, only two or three thousand times as many can understand his reduction of it. He knows that all of Philo Vance's vaporings will be skipped, by those who are impressed as well as by those who want to get on with the story. Yet there they are, with the affectations of the detective which are not part of the character, with a type of lordly writing which actively holds up the narrative. One feels that these things are deliberate, even wilful, that the author, in full consciousness of his hold over the public, writes badly "and makes them like it." It may not detract from the popularity of the series, for people are impressed by pedantry and false characterization, but the naïve shag tobacco and the love of the violin of Sherlock Holmes strike us as being more honest and in the end contribute to making him a "character" in every sense. The pedantry in Van Dine's character is, as I have suggested, eating its way into the plots. The technical skill of the books is so great that the author may be able to dispense with credulity, especially of motive; but here again he is despising his public, to the detriment of his work.

The general intelligence, the superior style, the careful construction of the Philo Vance series have, without doubt, brought thousands of readers to a formerly despised type of fiction, and they, in turn, will bring more intelligence and care to the detective story itself. I share Mr. Alexander Woollcott's weakness, which he confessed recently in a violent and reasonable attack on Van Dine: I would rather read a poor detective story than none at all. But I hope that the followers of Van Dine—and he himself before he makes good his threat to stop writing—will profit by his excellences and avoid his mistakes. For the detective story ought to keep its purity, approaching the serenity and the perfection of the mathematical formula; and it ought to be written in complete and honest respect for the reader. With that respect, pedantry is always at war.

GILBERT SELDES.

Alien

I saw a strange lost beast,
Unearthly, fire-fleeced,

Chained to a muddy ring,
Lie down, an alien thing

In a narrow yard unkept,
I saw this shame and wept.

And then by some dark law,
A stranger thing I saw—

Man's alien mind, his will,
Come each day meek and still,

Come each wide night afresh,
Home to the house of flesh

To take grim orders, wear
Old insult and despair;

And lie down tame at last,
To the muddy stake made fast.

HORTENSE FLEXNER.

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Concerning Comedy

I

READERS of the theater criticisms in this paper might very well expect an occasion like the production of "Vanity Fair" by the Players' Club to be reviewed. The Players' is an old and famous club which from time to time has numbered among its members names of great distinction. This in itself might be taken to imply a certain distinction in their yearly venture of reviving a play in which the parts, large and small, shall be taken by actors who very often, as like as not, would be seen in prominent roles. One might think also that there would be interesting points about the version of Thackeray's human comedy that served so notably for Mrs. Fiske two decades ago and that was made by Mr. Langdon Mitchell, whose comedy, "The New York Idea," is one of the outstanding marks in the history of the American drama. One might imagine, furthermore, diverse points of interest when such a player is involved as Miss Mary Ellis in the part of Becky Sharp, when the directing is by Mr. Dudley Digges, and when the décor for the Mid-Victorian material is by Mr. Robert Edmond Jones, the brilliant imagination and taste of whose designs in "The House of Women" and "Serena Blandish" still dazzle the mediocrity of recent seasons. A little explanation is due, therefore, partly by way of a just excuse and partly because this incident is not without illustrative elements with regard to the Broadway mind.

When reviewer's tickets failed to arrive at The New Republic, at which, following the general theater practice and the practice of the Players' Club productions in the past, they were expected, the office telephoned to the Club asking for tickets for Wednesday night, in order that the event might be reviewed in the succeeding issue of the magazine. Some gentleman in charge replied that the sale was excellent, but that they would be glad to reserve such a brace of tickets as were available, would the reviewer call at the box-office before the curtain and ask for the tickets? On Wednesday morning came the telephone message that the sale was so good that there was standing room only, not a seat left, with regrets, etc. It was, clearly, impossible by then even to buy tickets.

A review is therefore impossible, and New Republic readers will have to write to their friends in town here or near certain libraries, asking them how the venture came off.

It might be thought by some that any honest discussion, any criticism attempting to set forth the significance of the Players' Club's accomplishment, its defects and advantages, as indicative of the present time and reminiscent of the past, would be of some interest and value to the Club itself, as an organization that promotes the theater art. Such criticism, added to the newspaper reviews, however admirable they may be, might easily contribute something at least to the general sum of the current enterprise on the Club's part, might help to preserve a certain continuous element in this yearly purpose, and even might, taken practically, do no harm to the accumulated mass of attention that awaits next year's design—for, after all, in any intelligent sense, art, even in the theater, is not wholly a matter of hand to mouth. This is only one side of the case. As business the takings of a theatrical venture lasting only a week cannot be greatly profited by any weekly. If the run of the play is extended over a second week such a paper as The New Republic might be of mild use at the box-office, but not much even then—all this provided you see only the end of your nose in art. Such a point of view will not be wholly strange to many; in its lowest form it is familiar to everyone, witness the cab drivers in town when there is rainy weather.

II

Professor Ashley H. Thorndike's "English Comedy," recently published by the Macmillan Company, is a review running to some six hundred pages of the four hundred years of our comic theater. Professor Thorndike opens with the usual attempt to state the precise nature of the comic. He starts with the famous theory of incongruity, the sudden shock to our expectations and the emotional collapse that follows; to which reference from the "Rhetoric" he adds the other, equally famous, from the "Poetics," that humor is found in the ludicrous, which in turn derives from some defect or ugliness that is not painful or destructive. From these distinguished esthetic wheezes he progresses at length to Voltaire's observation, more suited to most of our comic writing, that "laughter arises from a gaiety of disposition, absolutely incompatible with contempt and indignation," and so on and on to a very sensible and open sum of his own, which is not so much a fresh definition of the comic as it is a luminous hospitality for the whole lively and elusive host of comedies that begin with the shepherd's play (*circa* 1400) in the Towneley collection and pass through such diversity as lies among Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Oscar Wilde, Congreve, Dion Boucicault, Barrie, Shaw, Pinero, Beaumont and Fletcher, Robertson, Sheridan, John Synge and many another. He then affords us an account that is based on an admirable acquaintance and scholarship throughout this wide and restless field of art. You may safely go to his history for short and adequate records of innumerable plays and sources, and scores of comic writers, and for summaries of content that are very often finely just.

There are four main considerations, it seems to me, that are to be undertaken when you write a book of this kind. The esthetic—the problem of the nature of the comic pleasure in art. The tradition—the stream of material, technical device, precedent, the parallels, in sum, and the history. The implication of human life—the fund of zest, laughter, inmost sarcasm, wit, the energy of life pouring out in this bubbling and happy creation. The relation of comedy writing to some society—by which I mean not to the historical facts of the society in which the comic writer or his work appeared so much as I do the conception of society, if there is any, that underlies his work. It is on the basis of this last that Professor Thorndike's book seems to me to break down, to lack any really final substance, to evince what to me at least is its crying necessity.

At the very end of this sensible and careful book there is a chapter called "Conclusion," a sort of cultural *envoi*, as it were, a pretty bit where the host of quaint fellows, charming ladies, oddities and whimsies, clowns and wits

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and naughty maids and saucy wives come trooping down aisles and all that, and where various enthusiasms are revived with exclamation points. This, doubtless, is a hangover from some earlier academic desire for making one's scholarly matter engaging, but it is sorry indeed if you take it beyond the limits of a culture club, where such a résumé read aloud might please as a sort of guessing game; how many do you know—Lady Gay Spanker, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Malvolio, Cherry, Scrub, Miss Pros and Captain Hook? Such kindly ardors and resumptions make this chapter serve perfectly the case in point. How much better it would have been to try, for a last stretch, to restate the gusto, poetry and life that, with frequent French assistance, make English comedy what it is when it is good, and the lack of any round view of life as a social sum, the lack of any general underlying social conception, that has so limited many a good English comedy taken as a whole.

You cannot go on talking about Ben Jonson's observation of the life around him, his school of realism, his indebtedness to Plautus and Terence, without saying that, when all is said and done, this magnificent talent comes short in comedy because at the core he has something barbarous, and that though he got plots and motivations from the classic source and learned there how to catch into his work the ribbons, roses, vices, powders, pomades, fashions and haunts of the town, he never could set them into any basic social unit—Plautus himself, writing for a Roman rabble, you might add, was barbarous enough and in his turn picked his device from later Greek comedy without giving it any essential base. "The Way of the World" has in spots no doubt the most beautiful writing in all prose comedy; but what keeps this play so far below Molière as social comedy is that Congreve has really nothing final to say about his matter and could not, it seems, draw, for its benefit, an adequate social conception from the world around him.

The scale, proportion and general sum in Molière is what distinguishes him from our writers of comedy, many of whom surpass him in lyric gift, wayward fecundity and incidental range and diversity of character and material. His final and profoundest characteristic is what is summed up in the word *tone*.

The formulation of such a concept and the constant application of it to the comic writing under consideration is the thing which this book of Professor Thorndike's needs, and without which, except for certain purposes of study or reference, it cannot be important. STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Catholics and Birth Control

SIR: On reading "The Catholics and Birth Control," by Patrick J. Ward, in your May 29 issue, I was struck by one very strong impression, which I feel is peculiarly significant. While inspired by Mr. Ward's article, however, the thoughts which follow are not a protest against Mr. Ward in particular, or the Catholics in general, but against the attitude toward sex almost universal among so-called religious persons.

The impression which forced itself on me is that Mr. Ward, like all Catholics—and most Protestants—has little or no appreciation of the esthetic or spiritual side of sex love. Why is it that the more "religious" people are, the more they look upon the creative force in life as something essentially dirty, vulgar, materialistic?

Everything has its physical aspect, of course. To the tone-deaf, the wonderful music of Kreisler is nothing but the rubbing of resined horse hairs against the dried-out intestines of a cat. But one would have to be pretty blind spiritually, to talk of Kreisler's love for music as "the gratification of auditory appetite," or to say that instead of "indulging in his passion for noise" he should "practise self-control."

Even prayer—supposed to be the intercourse between an individual and a deeper, more real power—has its purely physical side such as kneeling, interlacing fingers, movement of lips and vibration of larynx. But the *meaning* of prayer, as of music or sex—what you might call its spiritual significance—lies in its effect on our health and consciousness, which, in turn, depends on our appreciation and attitude of heart and mind.

The opposition of the "spiritual" to the "materialistic" is not that between two distinct substances, like steam and ice, but between a refined, consecrated and thoughtful way of doing something and a crude, vulgar, thoughtless way. So the spiritual handling of prayer, music or sex, is not abstention from the physical manifestations but a proper and exalted handling of the physical so as to produce the greatest inspiration and harmony of mind and body.

One would think that the function of religion would be to point out the subtle, spiritual values in things, but in sex-love, you have the paradox that the more "religious" a man is, the more blind he is to the spiritual possibilities and subtler meanings—the more his mind sees only the crude, physical, sensual side.

Of course if one's only experience of music were a group of apes making horrible sounds on violins, one would have an unshakable conviction that music in itself was essentially vile, dirty and sinful.

The real animus behind the objection to birth control is the unshakable conviction that sex-love in itself (apart from the function of reproduction) is something essentially sinful and wholly materialistic. As a matter of fact nothing in life is more mental than sex, because in nothing else does the attitude of mind so completely determine whether the effects are good or bad.

The churches wink at many forms of sexual debasement and crudity, and tolerate the coarse guffaws and snickers that greet any allusion to sex. In fact, in these matters you can do or say almost anything you want to and avoid serious censure from the religious, as long as you show that you consider sex as something dirty and cheap—something to joke about. But what fills fundamentalists with horror is to have serious-minded people show an appreciation for the beauty and constructive possibilities in sex. *To think that the creative power in life has a spiritual side—that is the unforgivable sin according to the constituted authorities supposed to guide our spiritual life!*

Is it any wonder that a civilization so "emotionally illiterate," so uneducated in love and happiness, has just passed through an orgy of self-destruction and hate, and is pointing (as Stuart Chase showed so convincingly in "The Two-Hour War") toward a still more monstrous cataclysm of cruelty and destruction by fiendish poison gases? WILLIAM H. COULTON.

Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.

Professional Jurors

SIR: President Hoover's Commission on Lawlessness should find the breakdown of the jury system the center of its problem. Though the system has worked well for six or seven centuries it is now functioning badly. . . .

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Our civilization is very complex as compared with that of the twelfth century. Jurymen now cannot grasp or hold in mind details of a trial, and often base their decisions on minor and unimportant aspects of cases. Intellectually disqualified, often distracted because their private affairs are going badly in their absence, juries are many times hypnotized by talented, unscrupulous lawyers and the lawyers' will becomes theirs. Moreover, juries will not convict in a community which is opposed to the law under which a defendant is tried. Neither will a jury convict if its members are in fear for their lives, or those of their families.

The only possible remedy for the above ills is to make jury service a profession, requiring preparation equal to that of the legal fraternity. Federal jurymen, like federal judges, should be appointed by the President, and themselves judged by a special court, and the system later extended to the states.

JOSEPH V. COLLINS.

Stevens Point, Wis.

The Two-Hour War

SIR: The ability of the masculine mind to accept a fact theoretically and at the same time refuse to face it practically is a continual source of wonderment to a woman. Among the men who serve as delegates to disarmament conferences, there is probably not one who is not fully aware of the facts so clearly and forcefully set forth by Mr. Stuart Chase in your issue of May 8—that armies and navies are obsolete, that the next war will be fought from the air with poison-gas bombs, and that it will involve the wholesale extermination of large sections of the civilian population. They must be perfectly conscious that their solemn disputes over so many pounds of battleship more or less or so many men more or less under arms have about as much to do with the case as the flowers that bloom in the spring—that they might almost as well spend their time arguing over how many bowmen this or that nation shall be permitted to have in training, or whether or not three biremes are equal to two triremes. And yet not one of them has had the sanity and the courage to get up and say: "Look here—this is bunk, and we all know it. Let's stop fooling and get down to brass tacks. What can we do to drive down into the minds and hearts of the people of the world the realization of what another war would mean to them and their children?" Not one of them has been man enough to call the secret horror out into the open and grapple with it face to face. There they sit like children wrangling over their toy battleships and little tin soldiers, while round them, like clouds gathering for a tempest,

> The giant shades of fate, silently flitting,
> Pile the dim outline of the coming doom.

New York City. MARGARET H. WAGENHALS.

Keeping Emigrants at Home

SIR: It is obvious that we cannot accommodate in this country all the foreigners who desire to join us, but it is equally obvious that under present conditions the industry of bootlegging ns inflicts upon us the same poor quality of material that we in bootleg liquor.

There is but one answer—and that is that we do all in our power to help foreign nations to establish abroad a degree of prosperity as nearly comparable as possible with that we enjoy.

Mr. Henry Ford does this in a most effective way when he establishes abroad the factories, methods, and practices which he has brought to so successful a culmination here.

Foreigners will not then have the incentive to leave home they have now—and to us, as well as other countries, only benefit will result from the promotion of prosperity elsewhere, for prosperity, like a river, will overflow when it rises above normal.

The average productivity in Europe is about $1,500 a year per capita, while here it is $5,000. It is obvious that when Europeans enjoy a productivity of $5,000 per capita, they will afford a market just that much better for us.

Europe and the rest of the world have never learned the potential value that their people have for promoting prosperity within their borders, when their people's economic value has been developed through a surplus of income in excess of their daily wants. They are in a fair way now, through the efforts of Mr. Henry Ford, to learn the great principle that it is infinitely more profitable to employers to pay high wages rather than low—thus developing the buying power of their own people, whose wants are no less than ours, though they have no means of giving expression to them.

The real competition that would be the life of trade, and not the death of it, is the competition between employers to see how high they can raise wages. Then they will know prosperity as they have never known it before!

What can be done here with a population of 100,000,000 can be done four times over with Europe's population of 400,000,000.

ROBERT J. CALDWELL.

New York City.

The Ethics of Nullification

SIR: The major emotional premise of Mr. Robert C. Binkley, who writes on "The Ethics of Nullification," is one which reasonable men must share with him—impatience with the tedious process required to wipe off the books unworkable legislation like prohibition. Rather than plod the detours, Mr. Binkley invents a royal short-cut for us. Legislative repeal is one way of good riddance. Another nullifying agency is social disobedience. Mr. Binkley suggests that social nullification should be esteemed as the twin sister of formal repeal. He urges that violation of some statutory edicts is not law-breaking, and implicit praise is given to administrative officers who yield somewhat to public bias in their enforcement.

Such views come strangely from a liberal. Enlightened despotism is nevertheless despotism. Its core is in the "rule of men" and discretion. Inequality of treatment by administrative officers has usually been the cause of condemnation from friends of enlightenment.

The weakness in his proposal is the premium it puts on forgetfulness of the classic duty of the citizen. The peaceful ordering of society still requires us to heed the Socratic example of absolute obedience to the rules of conduct that spring from the sovereign.

Mr. Binkley supports his belief in the equivalent power of social nullification by a formal metaphysic of law. He tells us that law is the product of the internal development of the community . . . the essential element of which is consensus and command. So if the members of the community refuse consent, the statutory rule is not "law." Much need not be said about the vagueness of his view, nor that the element of consent of the members of the community is as pure a fiction as any Mr. Binkley derides. Most citizens are blissfully ignorant of many rules that Mr. Binkley would undoubtedly call law. If consent connotes a minimum of substance, it connotes knowledge as a basis for judgment. But these are some of many more objections that have long since been made by Gray, of whose luminous work Mr. Binkley seems unaware. Besides, the concept "law" is used with varying connotation through the article. Is the formal metaphysic specially designed to justify the theory of nullification?

If legislatures were quick to accept the verdict created by the conduct of the members of the community in respect of the kind of statutory rules which Mr. Binkley discusses, there would be no need for the theory of social nullification. The difficulty is a particular aspect of the pathetic romanticism of our time—or of all times—which allows a tight grasp of a formal, verbal rule alongside of blindness to its operation. Amongst most humans, Don Quixote and Sancho Panzo still live apart. Social nullification as a red flag for *change in legislation* is the excellent call of the rationalist to relate the rule and its effect. But social nullification as a substitute for formal repeal, with its implications which defy the civilized necessity for the duty of citizenship, will be looked upon by some as a rather terrible suggestion.

NATHANIEL H. KUGELMASS.

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Bad News

All Quiet on the Western Front, by Erich Maria Remarque. Translated from the German by A. W. Wheen. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

IF a man has been in prison twenty years, and is then released, we should most of us agree that his life has been ruined. Not only have twenty years been taken away from him, but the bitterness of a special and futile knowledge will overshadow the rest of his days. But time, as we know (though none of us knows why), goes fast or slow according to what we are doing and where we find ourselves, and who shall say whether a few years in the trenches of the latest war might not have been the equivalent of at least twenty years in a peaceful jail?

In all the writing about the War which has the stamp of truth on it we find this feeling of the ghastly slowness of time. In "All Quiet on the Western Front" it is the first thing that strikes us. It is as if the War had been going on forever, and was creeping forward into an endless succession of tomorrows. "We are at rest five miles behind the front. Yesterday we were relieved, and now our bellies are full of beef and haricot beans. We are satisfied and at peace." The present moment is all that can possibly exist. Neither the past nor the future will bear thinking about.

This is a book about something that nobody likes to talk of too much. It is about what happens to men in war. It has nothing whatever to do with the politenesses, the nobilities, or any of the sometimes pretty and sometimes ridiculous notions to which the world has once again settled down. The hero is a boy nineteen years old, a private in a German infantry regiment; his friends are mostly the same age. But it is hardly accurate to call them boys; as the author says of them: "We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial—I believe we are lost."

Some of them have volunteered; more have been drafted. The War, though they do not know it, has passed its peak: the slow decline of attrition has set in. The vague sense of fatality that we are made to feel in the opening pages gradually becomes a realization of approaching defeat. The new recruits come to the front younger and younger—so that even these boy-veterans of nineteen feel aged and protective. This is how the new recruits look when they are dead:

> Their sharp, downy faces have the awful expressionlessness of dead children.
>
> It brings a lump into the throat to see how they go over, and run and fall. A man would like to spank them, they are so stupid, and to take them by the arm and lead them away from here where they have no business to be. They wear grey coats and boots, but for most of them the uniform is far too big, it hangs on their limbs, their shoulders are too narrow, their bodies too slight; no uniform was ever made to these childish measurements.

The steady, unhurrying narrative picks its way from one desolation to another, following the fortunes of these precocious professionals, who have learned how to be soldiers and nothing else. They have their sprees and their moments of happiness, as when the indefatigable Tjaden spots an unlucky pig-pen or poultry-yard; they have their windfalls, of women and extra rations; they even have their vacations. But it was not always a pleasant change, in Germany of the last war years, to go from the comparative ease of a rest-camp to the evident starvation of home. And between the civilians and the soldiers returned from the front was a gulf impossible to bridge.

> They talk to me too much. They have worries, aims, desires, that I cannot comprehend. I often sit with one of them in the little beer-garden and try to explain to him that this is really the only thing: just to sit quietly, like this.

And behind all the momentary reprieves lies the inescapable reality of the life to which they are all doomed: "bombardments, barrage, curtain-fire, mines, gas, tanks, machine-guns, hand-grenades—words, words, but they hold the horror of the world."

These youngsters whom the War is swiftly making unfit for civilian life (though many of them will not have to make the change) have cast aside, of necessity, all that they have been taught. They have had to become soldiers, and they are nothing else. They believe in the present moment; it is not enough, but it is all they can be sure of. Love they have not known, patriotism and all the other abstract virtues and vices have vanished away in their first drum-fire; but something human they must cling to. They cling to their friends—not literally, and not even in words: when their friends are killed, there is nothing to be said. But what keeps them going in man's machine-made hell is the bodily presence of the friends around them.

> They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades.

I have said nothing in criticism of this book, and there is little I will say. It is written with simplicity and candor, and reads as if it had been well translated. There is nothing mawkish about it, and nothing "literary"—it is not the artful construction of fancy, but the sincere record of a man's suffering. Unlike the experimental artist, the author has nothing new to say; but he says it so honestly and so well that it is like news to us, though it is bad news.

> I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. And all men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world, see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me. What would our fathers do if we suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account? What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years business has been killing—it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us?

Another country has been heard from. We know by now that the victor nations got nothing but evil from the War; had we expected, then, that the Germans had derived some virtue from defeat? No, the War did no good to anybody. Those of its generation whom it did not kill, it crippled, wasted, or used up. We hear hopes expressed that another generation may be wiser. Let us pray, rather, that it will not have to learn such costly wisdom.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

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The Life of Stendhal

Stendhal, by Paul Hazard. Translated by Eleanor Hard. New York: Coward-McCann. 315 pages. $3.

PROFESSOR PAUL HAZARD is the traveling salesman of French learning. He is fully as indefatigable and as ubiquitous as Dr. Georges Dumas, the Pan-American peripatetic psychologist. The days when French scholars shut themselves up in their stuffy studies are fortunately past. This is the book of a man of the world. And none but a man of the world could have done full justice to Stendhal: no Dryasdust need apply.

Why should we attempt to summarize this work? You will read it if you read this review at all. For the book is addressed to three circles of readers. First of all, to the Happy Few (to borrow Stendhal's own phrase) who know their Henri Beyle and love him; to those who, like Taine, read over piously, every year, the complete canon of Stendhalian Scripture, as young Ruskin was made to read the Bible. Then to the Unhappy Few (not so few either) who know him and do not like him. Finally, to the Many who do not know him at all. Stendhalians of the strictest observance recognize Paul Hazard as a master. For the uninitiated, the work remains fascinating as a psychological romance. It is the searching and sympathetic tale of a disappointing destiny, the tender and ironical presentation of a rare and puzzling character. It is a study in lop-sided genius, the plumbing of depths within depths of failure. The artistic effect of the book is extraordinarily subtle and yet not cryptic: for, constantly alert and entertaining in style, it is exquisitely sad in spirit.

This remarkable work, apart from its purely narrative interest, raises many problems in literature. It proves, for one thing, that biography is a *genre* by itself, a legitimate and delightful one, which has but an accidental connection with literary—or political—history. Paul Hazard was well advised in devoting very few pages to the works of Stendhal; for the purpose of this biography, their value does not much matter. The recognition that Stendhal won so late in life—and even then, in scant and grudging measure—the posthumous glory he had so confidently prophesied, are secondary, almost negligible elements. The interest of Paul Hazard's study would have been very much the same, if Stendhal had been indeed what so many of his contemporaries thought he was, a literary mediocrity. The keynote of this book is eternal frustration, not achievement.

Conversely, it is extremely doubtful whether the life explains the book in any valid fashion. No doubt, Julien Sorel, the hero of "Red and Black," was Stendhal himself —partly. He was also, and more obviously, what Stendhal wanted to be and never was. And he was much else besides. No one could honestly reconstruct the personality and the life of Henri Beyle from his portraits of Julien or Fabrice.

The book also breeds a wholesome skepticism about literary classifications. Stendhal is a hybrid. He lived at the time of Romanticism; he did his bit in the Romantic onslaught against Classicism. His isolation, his Byronic pose (including a particularly unsuitable form of Dandyism), his savage irony, his yearning for love, his almost crazy worship of violence and even of murder, are all Romantic traits. Yet he was also a survivor of the eighteenth century, an ideologist after the fashion of Destutt de Tracy, an old-fashioned Liberal like Homais, a realist like Flaubert. In his style, he attempted to pastiche the severity of the "Civil Code." His lack of Romanticism in this respect was a clear case of sour grapes. He felt flamboyant; he wrote coldly, at times clumsily, because he could not write any better.

Finally, this subtle psychological study of a master psychologist undermines our belief in psychology. What was the Ego of that Arch-Egotist? Paul Hazard professes not to know: Stendhal certainly did not know. "What sort of a person have I been all my life? To be frank, I have no idea. I am famed as a man of wit and as a heartless roué; and yet I have constantly been obsessed by unhappy love affairs. What sort of a person have I been? I shall never know. What friend, close though he be, can tell me? To what friend have I ever spoken one word of all my love and chagrin? Have I really been a witty man? Have I had a touch of talent? Have I been a genius or an idiot? Hero or coward? And, most of all—happy—or unhappy?"

The hateful word "devastating" is here literally right. Analysis has achieved the paradoxical triumph of consuming itself. After forty years of cold, precise study, Beyle can only repeat with Montaigne: "What know I?" and with the Preacher: "All is vanity."

The translation leaves nothing to be desired in alert raciness. But Hazard is preëminently a scholar, and there are a number of flaws in the rendering of his prose that will cause him pain. A man of the towering height of five foot six sounds like an absurdity; evidently Eleanor Hard does not know that the French foot is larger than the English measure; Ogre Joubert was well over six feet. The Cid does not fight a duel with Don Diègue his father. *"Mauvais caractère"* is cross-tempered, not "a bad character." *"Un officier d'ordonnance"* is not "an ordinance officer." "The Three Sultans" are probably three Sultanas. Eyes are better shaded by a green vizor (*visière*) than by a "vizier." A work of Mérimée's is referred to as "Gazul and Guzla," as though the twain were hero and heroine in the same tale. There are two books (both, by the way, more shameless hoaxes than "The Cradle of the Deep"): "The Dramas of Clara Gazul," and "The Guzla," Illyrian lyrics. Minor blemishes, upon which it would be pedantic to insist, when the general effect is so felicitous. But a work of this quality must be treated with meticulous respect.

ALBERT GUÉRARD.

Literature or History

The Reinterpretation of American Literature, edited by Norman Foerster. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 271 pages. $2.

THERE are as many ways of approaching a literature as there are possible sources of interest to attract; and Mr. Foerster, in his introduction to this collection of nine papers by American college professors, is careful to warn against too complete adherence to the one method which has dominated all others in American scholarship. "The historical scholar attains his most striking triumphs when dealing with inferior literature; this is true because his methods and instruments perhaps suffice for the explanation of such literature; while they do not suffice for the explanation of superior literature." Unfortunately, the sense of limitations implied in this and other statements is not enough to induce Mr. Foerster as editor to enlarge the compass of his program for the reëxamination of our national literary history. One is justified in so modifying the word in the title to "reëxamination," for this symposium, or the direction which it indicates, has

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actually very little to do with the problem of interpretation. A less ambitious and more accurate title would likewise prevent the disappointment that ensues when one realizes that the several contributors almost invariably mean literary history when they refer to literature.

It must be apparent that the program offered in this book with such pioneer gusto includes few elements not already so commonplace to modern criticism as to be in process of being discarded. (In the otherwise valuable "select" bibliography in the appendix, one is sorry to miss the names of Randolphe Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank and others who laid the ideological foundations of this book ten or more years ago.) What it constitutes in fact is a belated academic affiliation with the romantic generation of the last decade which squandered itself, in criticism at least, in the virgin morasses of American sociology. And what is discouraging in prospect is the almost certain continuance of the breach between university scholarship and unattached modern criticism. For what is most characteristic of our younger critics today, as it is most pertinent to the fresh reinterpretation of our literture, is the impulse to approach works of the past as *literature* and not as something else—not as moral tracts, or psychological reports, or social documents. It is an impulse, moreover, which recognizes the instant need here in America of a more rigorous esthetic discipline, to be directed not toward its own perfection, but toward the apprehension of what Ramon Fernandez once called the "spiritual dynamism" inherent in certain works of the imagination.

WILLIAM TROY.

A Gad-Fly

Holier Than Thou, by C. E. Ayres. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 240 pages. $2.50.

THE Way of the Righteous" is the subtitle of this book, and that way is immediately interpreted as unconscious, custom-controlled folkways and mores. Fashions in morals are like fashions in dress, only the former are generally supposed to have some firmer basis, such as the divine will or inherent idealism. "Holier" is really reducible to richer, stronger, shrewder. The truth about things is merely factual, having to do with things and machines, while language as a medium of social interaction is employed in soft answers to turn away wrath and to gain personal advantage. "Civilization is bounded by machinery and decorum." Prohibition arose from the necessity of having sober workmen to operate machines, but does not apply to the owners, that is, to the rich. Religion and morality are glorifications of the mores. The sinner is tolerable because he admits that the customs should be upheld, though he himself is too weak to conform to them. Society, therefore, tolerates him and forgives him much, but it cannot forgive the pariah who criticizes and denounces the customs. That was the tragedy of Jesus: he not only broke the Sabbath; he denounced the importance attached to it. Sex mores tolerate prostitution but not extra-marital love. "If a man respects the sanctity of the home, he may keep a dozen mistresses and be a pillar of society." Social change comes about like volcanic action in the earth, and the heat and thunder of moral leaders and revolutionists simply represent the presence of volatile materials and a sudden local slip of the continental landscape. "The passage from feudalism to industrialism is such a continental divide." The emergence of our new continent of industrialism affects most violently those whose occupations cross the area of social disturbance: stage people and other artists are peculiarly susceptible to shifts in emotional and sexual affairs; scientists are exposed to religious doubt; working men to questionings about the holiness of captains of industry. Moral pioneering, then, is the great illusion of the righteous. It is "a loathsome disease," "the leading irony of fate." The conclusion is that "there is nothing to be done about it." In a world where the average mental age is twelve, only a few ever pass through intellectual adolescence. For those who do penetrate the illusion, the compensations are such as sophistication brings, chiefly that "nothing matters much." Just the little things matter most—"meat and potatoes for dinner!"

Probably the author would not care to be called a cynic. That would suggest too much seriousness. I imagine he would prefer to be thought a laughing philosopher. He has done a brilliant piece of work to that end. Underneath his writing glides the spirit of Schopenhauer, though not so much Schopenhauer's pessimism, as his conviction of the non-rationality of existence. Thorstein Veblen appears on the third page, and William Sumner is ever present. The style shows that the author was early conditioned by biblical phrases, and it bears evidence of studied familiarity with science—though it be "Science: A False Messiah," as his earlier book was named. For him Warner Fite is one of the wisest of the wise because Mr. Fite says, "Moral action is thoughtful action" and rejects the distinction of the good man and the bad, as a distinction morally irrelevant. The book is entertaining and provocative of searching thought, a useful gad-fly for those who are inclined to take their morals and religion glibly.

E. S. AMES.

Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams, The Second First Lady of the Land, by Dorothie Bobbé. New York: Minton, Balch and Company. 327 pages. $3.50.

THIS book's scope is wider than that of the average biography. Mrs. Bobbé has not confined herself to the life of Mrs. John Adams. Hers is a more thrilling subject. In this narrative she combines the astonishing number of points where the early history of the United States was shaped by members of this family. And yet she has preserved the homespun background from which all this brilliance sprang.

The reason is not hard to find. Under the pages of racy, historical summarization lies a bony structure of research. It is sound, well thought out. After considerable study Mrs. Bobbé has painted her picture with zest and humanity. You get some clue to the breadth of the Adams influence when you remember that John's first important action was to defend before the law the British captain who commanded the troops responsible for the "Boston Massacre" and that his last was the appointment of John Marshall as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The years between were filled with much bitterness and anxiety. They are here viewed through the eyes of a wife and of the mother whose son, John Quincy Adams, went to Europe at the age of ten as his father's secretary. He was later to become the most accomplished President of the nineteenth century. Here we see the forbears, hard-headed, conscience-ridden, sensitive, witty and with hearts as warm as any that ever beat.

CHANLER A. CHAPMAN.

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Gothic Art and Christianity

Art and the Reformation, by C. G. Coulton. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 622 pages. $7.50.

MR. COULTON has disturbed the placid waters of medieval history once more. He has written another book, even more iconoclastic than his "Five Centuries of Religion," that thought-provoking though somewhat prejudiced analysis of medieval monasticism. Some years ago the Bishop of Gloucester dubbed Mr. Coulton *advocatus diaboli,* a term of reproach not altogether uncomplimentary to an honest historian. What piously inclined medievalists will say of this book remains to be seen.

"Art and the Reformation" has a poor title. In its six hundred pages there is comparatively little about art, and less about the Reformation. What the author seeks to prove is that Gothic art in its origin was far less religious in spirit than the popular writers of the present day would have us believe; and also that "its death-blow came not so much from the Reformation as from that general transformation of the western intellect which we call the Renaissance."

This thesis he has supported with vigor and learning—the cynic may remark, with too much vigor and too little learning. Nevertheless, to anyone who has even nibbled at the difficulties of medieval exegesis, the erudition and painstaking research of Mr. Coulton are self-evident. That our writer lays about him with a great cudgel, belaboring heartily Montalembert, Cardinal Gasquet and our own Mr. Cram, is not necessarily to his discredit. Furthermore, polemic writing has a charm of its own, and the pugnacities of Mr. Coulton endear him to many hearts.

Just what is the significance of Gothic art? In the opinion of Viollet-le-Duc, which is contradicted by almost everybody else, it represents the communal spirit of the Middle Ages—an emblem of liberty in opposition to feudalism. Henry Adams draws for us a picture of Chartres, making a clear analogy between its architecture and the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Miss Elizabeth Boyle O'Reilley, in "How France Built Her Cathedrals," is of the opinion that the Gothic is peculiarly French in spirit and charm, a judgment which Mâle heartily endorses (see his "Art et Artistes du Moyen Age"). The latter writer, it is true, is somewhat more reserved than Miss O'Reilley. None the less, in his authoritative "L'Art Religieux du XIII Siècle en France," he intimates that Gothic art and French nationalism have much in common.

Mr. Coulton, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with demonstrating (Mr. Cram to the contrary) that Gothic architecture is not peculiarly Christian in character, and most certainly not Catholic. The monks, as artists and architects, receive scant attention from him. He advances evidence to show that ecclesiastics had little to do with the actual planning or construction of cathedrals. The free-masons, their guilds, their hand grips, their wander-years, are more interesting to Mr. Coulton than the monks. He would have us believe that between art and religion there is no necessary nexus, and that Gothic architecture did not, in itself, imply great faith. The story of the building of Chartres, which Henry Adams describes so beautifully, Mr. Coulton admits is authentic. But the manifestation of religion which accompanied the commencement of that edifice he believes was entirely the result of a local and temporary revival.

According to Mr. Coulton, the Renaissance, characterized by the beginnings of capitalism and the revival of classic forms, brought an end to Gothic art. In this statement there is not a little truth. What the author has neglected to point out is that Gothic art itself was a prophecy of the Renaissance. The real architecture of the age of faith was the more simple Romanesque. Gothic architecture shows sophistication, thought, interest in the animate world of nature. The Renaissance, the Reformation, the thirteenth century, are far less isolated phenomena than Mr. Coulton would have us believe. St. Bernard and Martin Luther intellectually are brothers, and some might say the same of Abelard and Leonardo da Vinci.

The virtues, faults and general point of view of Mr. Coulton have long attracted wide attention among the learned. His unwillingness, but not inability, to see the brighter side of the Middle Ages has distressed many historians. Those eager and desirous of bombarding all Catholics, both Anglo- and Roman, may find in his book an arsenal of facts. These, in general, are trustworthy. But it must be remembered that they are carefully selected in advance to prove a case; that the deductions drawn from them need careful scrutiny; and that an equally impressive array of facts may be drawn up by Mr. Coulton's opponents.

WALTER PHELPS HALL.

The Hermit Thrush

The Hermit Thrush, by Kathleen Millay. New York: Horace Liveright. 129 pages. $2.

THERE is a simple perfection about the title lyric of Kathleen Millay's second volume of poetry:

> Hear me, hear me,
> All ye lonely,
> I've a hearth as lone as thine,
> I've a song
> For singing only
> To a heart as lone as mine.

Many of the poems which it introduces achieve this standard; their quiet, unspectacular intensity cuts through to the core of poetry.

This volume has substance as well as charm. Miss Millay has objective concerns—not affected for literary exploitation—as her Sacco and Vanzetti poems highly evidence. She, perhaps, has uttered the most lasting comment on that barbarism. Consider the strong, surely sustained metaphor of "Law":

> Now once again the monster rears its head
> And crawls its greedy way across the world;
> Now once again the jaws are dripping red
> And claws are bleeding with the recent dead—
> And, satiate once more, the beast has curled
> Its sleeping body back upon its bed.

And the sharp poignancy of "Dirge":

> It is too much to know a million men
> Can make no footprint on the bleeding world,
> It is too hard for humankind to learn
> A million million cries can but return
> Into the emptiness whence they were hurled—
> And wait a little while and cry again.

These need no comment.

In Kathleen Millay's poetry is found the penetration, the accurately and simply couched impressions which characterize Emily Dickinson's work. Miss Millay, indeed, has the real qualities of a poet—intelligence, sincerity,

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ELLING AANNESTAD.

The Unchosen View the Chosen

The Chosen People: A Short History of the Jews in Europe, by Jerome and Jean Tharaud. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 240 pages. $2.

THOUGH they might be the last to admit it, the authors of this book obviously intend to make a point of the fact that the sufferings of the Jews in the Middle Ages were largely to be blamed on the Jews themselves. This is a thesis which it should not be at all difficult to prove in view of the masochistic character of the race. But instead of using racial characteristics, racial psychology and social conditions to prove their point, the Messrs. Tharaud build up their thesis by a series of incidents and hypotheses so fantastic that they are preposterous. Unfortunately, neither the Jew of the Middle Ages nor the reader of today, be he Jew or Gentile, is quite as gullible as the authors of this book. And lest there be any doubt about it, let me quote *verbatim* the record of an alleged incident intended to illustrate Jewish zeal and Jewish mob psychology:

> If you have seen an American or rather a Jewish film entitled "The Ten Commandments," you will remember a scene depicting the crossing of the Red Sea. For purposes of realism, great numbers of Jews from the New York ghetto were brought to Los Angeles. At the moment when this immense crowd, some on foot and some in chariots, was about to launch into the sea, the film director—a Jew—rushed on to the platform and shouted to the quivering crowd, "Jews, you are about to show the world one of the greatest scenes in our national history. Cast yourself into the sea which opens before you. A hundred dollars to the fellow who wrecks his chariot."

Nothing disparaging this reviewer could say can be quite so eloquent as these words of the authors themselves.

WALTER F. KOHN.

Contributors

JOHN HANNA was recently appointed associate professor of Law at Columbia University.

DUFF GILFOND is a Washington journalist.

BEULAH AMIDON is an associate editor of The Survey.

HORTENSE FLEXNER is a professor of English at Bryn Mawr and is the author of a volume of verse, "Clouds and Cobblestones."

ALBERT GUÉRARD is professor of French at Stanford University and the author of "Life and Death of an Ideal."

WILLIAM TROY is an instructor at New York University.

E. S. AMES, pastor of University Church of Disciples of Christ, Chicago, is the author of "The Psychology of Religious Experience," "The New Orthodoxy," and other books.

CHANLER A. CHAPMAN is on the staff of the New York Times.

WALTER PHELPS HALL is professor of History at Princeton University. He is the author of "Empire to Commonwealth."

ELLING AANNESTAD is on the editorial staff of W. W. Norton and Company.

WALTER F. KOHN is a young Chicago writer who contributes verse and criticism to various periodicals.

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